

2002-Eckhart Tolle Retreat Essence of NOW 6 Audio CD

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 0:01)

Lesson one.

[Speaker 1] (0:07 - 1:45:56)

Welcome to our weekend retreat. Retreat, the word comes from Latin, re always means back, treat probably means step back or pull back, step back. You're retreating, not so much from the world because the world is always here, the external world with its limitations, but from the mind.

Step back from the stream of thinking. And there's only one thing to learn here. One thing to get.

And that is a particular state of consciousness. That state of consciousness is free of thought, unlimited, unconditioned, formless. Thought is form.

Identification with thought is identification with form. So we are here to learn, not so much to learn because there's nothing to acquire, to discover within ourselves that state that is already there. That state of pure intelligence prior to thought, before thought arises, after thought has subsided, there is a state that is unconditioned and you can't acquire it or get it in time, in future.

If you look to the future for that state, you'll never get it because it's already there as your natural state, as it's sometimes called. So we are simply allowing that state to emerge, to be there. How?

By entering the stillness that is inseparable from that state. A state of knowing, but not knowing through concepts or labels or images. Pure knowing.

The teaching is not just in the words. The state itself is teaching itself. The state is here and all you have to do is be open to it.

Sitting here for a whole weekend is not interesting to the mind. To the mind it's tedious and boring because there's not enough there to feed it. Not even knowledge.

Our weekend retreat is not knowledge-based. Nobody here needs more knowledge. Nobody here needs to add more content to the accumulation of content that's already in the mind, the human mind.

That is sometimes called a person. It's full of content, ideas, opinions, belief systems. Full.

Some true, some not true. Nothing ultimately true. No thought can be ultimately true.

There's always another polarity. Any statement you make about anybody or anything is only partially true. It's a perspective.

Thought is always a no more than a perspective, a tiny fragment. Thought is always fragmentary. If we are totally identified with thought, we ourselves become fragmented.

The state of wholeness is lost. And we are here for the state of wholeness to emerge. Awareness, consciousness, unconditioned.

And to the mind that is not an interesting topic. Because the mind is form. It's only interested in form.

What can you feed me with? What can I absorb here? Nothing.

So occasionally you may find a wave of restlessness, of impatience, of total absence sweeping over you. And that is the momentum of the mind. Boredom, perhaps.

In boredom, there's a looking for something, but it can't be found. It's a frustrating state. The mind is looking to feed on something, but not finding it.

That's called boredom. And then you will drift off into some dreamland fantasy about past, future, imaginary situations, past situations. See yourself next week back in the office.

At least that's interesting. And then at times, the mind wave may subside. And there's simply, and there's a state now that is not recognizable by thought, is not recognizable by the mind.

So don't look to the mind to get, it can't, to the mind, that state is completely uninteresting. That is the state of simple and pure and still alert awareness. In other words, consciousness without thought.

Not that thought will never operate again. Thought comes out of that, goes back into that. But to know the vastness that is there beyond thought, and then gradually dwell in that.

Rather than dwell in the stream of thinking, you dwell in that unconditioned vastness. And that means quite often you will be walking, sitting, especially sitting here, moving, and there's simply a state of clear, alert presence. And you know without labels.

You know without thought. A deep knowing. That's the unconditioned.

Then thought operates much more beautifully when it operates out of that creative inspiration. And then again, you fall back into the stillness. And it's only a, don't mistake the word for it.

It's vaster than any word. Be still and know that I am God. The most profound statement in the Bible.

Be still and know. So there is a knowing in the stillness. But not knowing according to the mind.

To the mind it is a state of not knowing. To the mind it is a state of ignorance, and it doesn't like it. Because it has no position anymore.

And that's the only state of deep, vibrantly alive peace. That then surrounds whatever happens in your life as a manifestation of form, thought forms, emotional forms, external forms, come and go. And all those are then embedded in a field of stillness and peace.

So much so that field becomes more vital than whatever happens in it. And in other words, we are coming to know what the now means. The deeper meaning of now.

The most enigmatic thing. No thing. The one thing that's always there with you.

It's always now. That is the field in which the entire manifested world happens. And it's consciousness itself.

So during our weekend, one thing to remember is, there's very little here to remember, whatever goes through your mind is thought. And it doesn't really matter that much. Let it arise, if it's there.

Stand back from it, because it's a retreat. Stand back from thought. If you want to get back into thought in the office, that's okay.

But probably after this, you will want to stay back from thought as much as possible. And you see the relativity of all thought, that there's no ultimate truth in any thought. A fragment.

A position or a perspective. If you don't know that, you are trapped in thought. Completely identified with thought.

A mind-based entity. Always looking for more to add to your mind, because it's never enough. The entity is never complete.

No mind-based entity is ever complete. It never feels complete. So there's the search for more to add to the accumulation of content.

More. In whatever form. So whatever thoughts go through your head this weekend, it's only thought.

It's mental noise. Okay. You don't completely believe in it anymore.

It's just a thought. Comes and goes. And we are learning here, as a first step, and the

last step is always the same, to perceive the world, sense perception, in a state of such clarity and alertness that the labeling process of thought does not arise around the perception.

There's the key. If you can look, no matter what you're looking at, you can look at this form sitting here on the chair, you can look at any other form, look at the flower, at a tree, the sky, a chair, it doesn't matter what, you can look in a field of stillness without the need to label. At some point perhaps the label will come.

Even if the field of stillness is only there for two or three seconds, it's good enough. There's a depth to your perception which before wasn't there. Because there's no depth in thought.

If you look at something and immediately the mind labels it, which is the normal state, there's no depth. You're mistaking the labels for its pseudo-knowledge. You could know, you look at a tree, you know the name of the tree, and now you think you know what it is.

Just because there's a little sound attached to the sense perception, that little sound, which can be internal, or you speak it, or you hear it in your head, is mistaken for knowing what that is. Everything is totally shallow when you're trapped in labels. And that's the normal state of consciousness.

The world is not alive. A world of deadened conceptualization. For everything there's a little noise in the head.

And so the aliveness, the depths, and the miraculous nature of the universe gets covered up by that. Not only the universe of yourself. You do it to yourself.

You have a set of viewpoints, and perspectives, and opinions, and beliefs about who you are. Partly feeding on what the world around you tells you who you are. Not good enough, the greatest, the most miserable, for most people it's in between, they fluctuate.

So you get trapped in a conceptualized reality, a conceptualized sense of self. And that, in its essence, means not knowing who you are. When you live in and through a conceptualized sense of self, consisting of thoughts and images about me and my story.

And the roles that I play, which is more thought, identifying with that. Concepts in the head. And the whole of the aliveness of the world around you, and the depths of who you are beyond the deadening world of concepts is completely unknown to you then.

And then the rest of your life is in the service of improving and adding to the delusion of a conceptualized sense of self. I need to strengthen that delusion. So I'm looking for more to add to the delusion of who I am, to make it a little bit better, more secure,

bigger.

Add a bit more to me. New beliefs, new this, new that. And it is surprising if that is the normal human state of consciousness, that human history is so mad.

Such insanity, not just history, just switch on the TV, which, by the way, I recommend that you don't do this weekend, to learn about the insanity, the extreme manifestations of insanity, whoever, the terrorists, the scientists, manufacturers, chemical weapons, biological, all madness everywhere. They're just extreme forms. It's the same form of madness wherever you look.

And they're all looking for themselves, for completion. Never find it. So there's a pseudo-knowledge of mind.

And this is fine for practical purposes. It works quite well. We needed a little bit of mind to meet here.

It's useful to speak, too, to communicate, although there are other ways of communicating. When the mind, when you know the stillness that is prior to mind as the ground of being, then the mind is quite helpful, as it is helpful at this moment. It comes out of that still ground.

The words that come out of that have a certain quality, a certain aliveness, very different from words that come out of the mental accumulations stored up stuff in the mind that's repetitive, not alive. So even what the mind produces has an aliveness because you know that depth of stillness. As you speak, you sense that.

It speaks. You don't speak. So it begins with a simple thing like sitting here and listening in a state of such receptivity and alertness that little or no thought arises.

And then, now that I say that, perhaps the mind comes in and says, Oh, yes, there I was without thought. That's okay. The next step in human evolution and our gathering here, small as it may be, is part of that.

The next step in human evolution is rising above thought because we cannot stay in thought. It's mad. It's become mad and self-serving, a vicious circle.

If we stay trapped in thought, we would destroy ourselves because the madness of that state has now become more and more apparent and increasing madness. And that is because humans are approaching an evolutionary transition. And when you come to the end of one evolutionary stage, that stage of evolution which is thought, to be totally identified with thought is a stage of human evolution.

And when you reach the end of that stage as we are now, that state becomes and appears more and more dysfunctional. Just as the caterpillar just before it becomes a

butterfly becomes dysfunctional as a caterpillar. Whereas before there was nothing wrong with caterpillars.

They were fine. Thought was fine. So there's nothing wrong from the highest and deepest perspective.

There's nothing wrong with even the madness on the planet. It is part of the evolution. But we need to recognize it as madness that is part of the caterpillar recognizing that it's come to the end of an evolutionary stage.

So you need to recognize how mad your own mind is. The never-ending stream of thought. 95% of it completely useless and futile.

The rest 5% is helpful to deal with practical things. And then you have a civilization that thrives on mental vibrations. All the media, the TVs, noise, noise, noise.

And madness is not a personal matter. When I say your mind is insane I'm not making a statement about you as a person because it's not your mind. It's the human mind manifesting through this form.

So there's really not a person there at all. That sense of person is part of inhabiting a conceptualized sense of self that's the person. The person is concepts in the head.

So what is changing now as we move beyond identification with thought a totally new sense of identity arises. We have lived in a sense of identity or self that's been delusional. Self delusion or the delusion of self.

Self is the conceptualized sense of self. I'm using slightly different words. Even 2600 years ago the Buddha recognized the primary delusion as the self.

In other words, a false sense of self. That was the beginning of a new stage in human evolution. It looks a long time ago, 2600 years and we still haven't made it.

Even 2600 years ago he talked about it and we're still not there. That's very little time. He was a flower, an early flower of consciousness.

And then a few more here and there. And then the mind came in and looked at the flowers and said, oh, I wonder what that is all about. Flowers of consciousness.

And then it made it into belief structures and further conceptualization and then it became philosophies huge volumes theology and organized religion. The saving grace about organized religion is at the core of it there's often a little jewel, a light shining through. Often you can't see it anymore but at the core of it there is the original flower whether it be Buddhism or Christianity or any Hindu teachings there yes, it's there heavily covered up by mind stuff.

And mind stuff means you derive your sense of self from that conceptualized world the egoic sense of self so religion is in the service of strengthening the egoic sense of self instead of leading to the realization of oneness which is the original teaching unity, unitive realization of oneness which is love instead of that it does the opposite it's separative it creates a me and the other and the enemy and the egoic sense of self likes that it feels stronger when it has an enemy so the religions, they need their enemies the other religion they're fighting not even the other religion even within the religion they're fighting all part of the madness and so we are coming to the end of that and it starts with a simple thing sitting here or in your room or in the restaurant or walking and being able to look without the arising of labels the mind says, no you can't do that that's pointless two seconds is enough if then the label comes ok, then you know it's only a label and then perhaps it subsides again and there's more space or spaciousness around the perception the spaciousness in which the perception happens and then perhaps another label comes another thought, and that subsides and then you may find yourself walking from here to the door in a state of clarity and stillness and an amazing thing when you can be with another human being in that state of spacious stillness then you are bringing the new consciousness here it comes through you into this world, so to speak and all it requires is when you listen to somebody you listen from stillness just listen as a little anchor for that state I often recommend sensing the aliveness in your body that takes your attention away from the stream of thinking so as you sit here sensing that the body is alive not thinking about the body is alive but feeling the aliveness that is in every cell of the body and as you have some attention in there that is the anchor for staying present then it's easier to sit here if you sense that and perceive free of thought rooted within and listen free of thought be careful, thought will try to make this into some kind of future goal some kind of future aim to achieve where you need to get to and then it will get frustrated because it can't get there it's not a state that we need to achieve that state is already within you that's a miracle so it simply emerges so to speak every word is never totally true it can't be every word I say is a little pointer it's not the totality the state emerges it's already there because it's the unconditioned consciousness thought is the conditioned thousands and thousands of years of conditioning thousands and thousands of years of delusion but the good news is it doesn't take thousands of years to get out of the delusion it does not take time to get out of the delusion the mind doesn't like that it says, what, no time? it can't be true surely it must take considerable time and effort to get up what, you're telling me no time? I've been meditating for 30 years for nothing?

I have accumulated all that merit and here I am with people sitting with people next to me for whom the Power of Now was the first spiritual book they ever read and you are saying I'm not further along the path than this person yeah, that's quite possible the transformation of consciousness is not a cumulative thing where you accumulate merit or points or whatever they do at university and finally you make it if it were that neat and tidy that would be great but it isn't or in fact it wouldn't be great it can happen at

any moment to anyone even the criminal in prison it can happen to him and sometimes it does and it may not happen to the monk in his cell who's been meditating for 30 years or it may and you can be very wrong you can look at a person and say well, she surely won't make it this lifetime you could be very wrong or about yourself feeling either that you are worthy or you are not worthy two delusions you make yourself special in both cases you make yourself special in your worthiness and you make yourself special in your unworthiness surely I don't deserve that there are so many better people than me further conceptualization a further strengthening of the delusional sense of self the delusional sense of self will feed on anything good or bad conceptualize the miserable me the greatest me doesn't matter whatever it can get hold of it will take that, identify with that so here we are becoming familiar with that if we call it state every word, don't get attached to any word we're becoming familiar with that state and that is a state that is free of the psychological need for future in the normal state of consciousness the conceptualized sense of self there is an enormous need for future which implies I'm not complete, I need more and of course I need the future to give me the more to add to who I am so there is this enormous psychological need for future that drives everybody in that state that drives an entire civilization why are they all running around? Hong Kong, New York, wherever they need to get to the future as fast as possible of course they have their different things if you stop them and ask where are you going they say I'm going there and there I need to get there, don't talk to me now but it all comes down to they are rushing towards the future every human being is being pulled continuously into future and that creates of course a mad civilization and it's so normal that nobody questions it anymore everybody is rushing towards the future because there is a psychological need for completion in the future where I complete my conceptualized never enough sense of self so the psychological need for future comes to an end not that future no longer has its place in the practical realm we have future here we know that tomorrow we are going to meet here unless we don't nothing is certain probably tomorrow we are going to meet here and probably on Sunday eventually we will go home there is future there probably you will go to bed at some point tonight future in the practical realm is fine we needed it to meet here would have been difficult otherwise to get together it was future and now it's now ok, it works like that it functions in this realm phenomenal realm it's necessary I even have a watch sometimes people say you have a watch Mr. Power of Now as a watch that can't be right but that's only clock time or watch time quite helpful, I don't keep people waiting I can be there in time we are talking about psychological time this is the drive that pulls you towards future psychologically and that comes to an end and then of course you live in a state of presence that is another little word the new state of consciousness is a state of presence the old state of consciousness one could call a state of absence because you are trapped in conceptualization presence and you don't need future psychologically to complete yourself and with that comes an enormous ease to be where you are I'm already home for years lifetimes maybe I've been running towards home looking for not knowing that the place I'm actually at home in the now the now is my home people have been looking

to the future for their home by home I mean a sense of deep sense of aliveness and completion and fulfillment being fully yourself being fully maybe let's leave out the yourself being, the state of being to be and you look to the future to get to being being is inseparable from now nothing can be that's not now how could it? so home that completion is already here, now on the deepest level there's nothing you can add to you and nothing that matters you can add lots of things that don't really matter that much that's fine, that works in the phenomenal realm you can learn a new skill, you can learn a new language you can explore new countries you can add this or that to the content of your mind in the phenomenal realm that's fine, you can and why not add it's part of living in the phenomenal realm where these things happen you add and then of course you lose and some things come and some things leave you but none of that really matters whether you acquire this great skill what matters means it cannot complete you you cannot find yourself through it in that sense it doesn't matter if you're looking to yourself through this or that acquisition that's further delusion it never works you never find that completion you can become the greatest this or that and if you meet the greatest this or that and talk to them you'll find they're not complete they wake up in the middle of the night in a state of fear the one thing that matters on that deepest level you are already yourself the completion is already here you are home in the now living in that way imagine a totally different world would be created out of that state of consciousness you can't even imagine what form that world would take nor am I asking you to imagine it it would be very different from the world that the mind has created so that's the greatest news you don't need to look for yourself not even here in the sense of you're sitting here and trying to acquire something or add something you'll be frustrated on Sunday you'll go home in frustration I haven't added anything to me the good thing is that many humans are now becoming ready for the emergence of that state of consciousness you can't make it happen you can't make it happen you can allow it to happen that's why we're here we're not making it happen we're allowing it to happen how are we allowing it to happen? we're allowing it to happen by allowing this moment to be as it is allowing this moment the only one to be as it is that means allowing that state to emerge that is also true surrender the deepest meaning of surrender and surrender is the key not surrender where the mind says no I don't want to surrender I want to triumph true surrender is the key and true surrender means simply people talk about surrender to God how? what does he want?

or maybe it's a she how do I surrender to God? and then thoughts will come into your head and say this is God speaking and then doubt arises maybe it's not God at all this is the madness surrender to God means allow this moment to be as it is embrace it welcome it action may happen then through you but you allow the isness which is the totality expressing itself as this moment the form that this moment takes could not be otherwise the totality of the universe has brought it about everything is totally interconnected so this moment could not be otherwise but the conceptualized sense of self lives in opposition to it it strengthens itself through its opposition to the isness of this

moment the self grows through every reaction against what is the self the illusory self strengthens itself it loves its reactivity and in that reactivity there is a contraction in that contraction the illusion of self gets stronger and then you are against it no matter what happens it's the now and you don't like it you're trying to get somewhere else to the future madness and sanity arising allowing this is a revolutionary way of living allowing this moment to be as it is completely totally aligned internally aligned with the isness of now because since it is now it could not be otherwise the universe has brought about the form that this moment takes so who are you to fight it so you become aligned you don't become lethargic and all that, the mind says nothing will ever change I'm going to sit in my armchair or couch potato for the rest of my life I will become a couch potato if I allow this moment to be as it is but that's not the case it's a very dynamic state it is an uncompromising yes to what is dynamic, not passive and that also takes you to the end of incessant thinking and identification with thinking because if you look at thought activity a lot of the compulsive nature of thought is to do with not allowing this moment to be as it is a lot of the mental noise and the compulsion to think continuously is to do with denying trying to get away from being in opposition to the now and so allowing this moment to be as it is, is a little it's a doorway into the state of spaciousness stillness that is prior to thought compulsive thinking is not compatible with allowing this moment to be as it is so simple so the mind wants to create a problem and say how do I get to that state I'm not there allow this moment to be as it is and no matter what form it takes that changes continuously and more often than not the form that this now takes as an appearance of a situation a person, a condition more often than not you will encounter some limitation in the now something will come in and you allow that to be as it is the body itself is a limitation so you might catch this or that situation is never totally as it should be as the mind says something always gets in there to spoil it any situation something, at first it works for a little while and something has to get in there to spoil it that's what the world is for to frustrate you not to fulfill you in the course of this weekend of course there will be time perhaps for questions maybe tomorrow not that any question matters that much use the time that you're not here as much as possible be aligned with now yes, bring the yes to the now observe the psychological need for future when it arises observe identification with mind when you talk to somebody and you are now going to express your opinion your viewpoint, your mental position and observe identification with that mental position and just watch that oh, hmm allow that to be allowing is so wonderful because allowing brings about the spaciousness before there was only the thing that happened there was only the thought that you were identified with there was only the situation that you reacted against and that filled your whole life and now, yes, there is still a thought there is still a situation perhaps but the allowing of it creates something not doesn't create it makes you aware of a space around whatever happens a peace around whatever happens through simply allowing this moment there is suddenly a spaciousness around events around even difficult people most people are difficult Jean-Paul Sartre went so far as to say hell is other people he hadn't looked at his own mind so through allowing there is suddenly a sense of space around and that is the

space of pure awareness unconditioned consciousness the ground of all being and that's who you are not the little self in the head be still and know who you are and don't look for the stillness that creates another problem it's already here allow this moment to be as it is if it's totally noisy what, there's no stillness, I want stillness allow the noisy moment if it is noisy to be as it is allow the turbulent moment to be as it is, the turbulence in whatever form it takes instead of standing in a reactive relationship to the turbulence and thereby strengthening your own illusory form identity allow the turbulence to be and sense the spaciousness that's around it there's peace around it so you could be in the midst of mayhem and completely mad environment through completely allowing suddenly there would be peace and the strange thing is first that peace is encountered as an inner phenomenon but eventually that peace does something even to the situation that you totally accept it that's miraculous so our practices this weekend are very simple they are so simple that the mind would say well, that's not enough the spiritual practice is that allowing this moment to be as it is see if you can be and perceive, perceive without labels and the strange thing is that's already in almost everybody here you're already doing it but it's a little bit so short that you don't quite catch it and the mind comes in after a second or two whenever you look at something that suddenly comes into your field of vision something new suddenly arises for a second or two you're simply looking then some kind of interpretation comes in learn from the cat when a cat walks now a cat can teach you, like any animal can teach you to be free of thought the cat is pre-thought you are moving post-thought, beyond thought nevertheless, the state that is free of thought which is a state of connectedness with the totality unproblematic the cat's state of consciousness is unproblematic the liberated human state of consciousness is unproblematic only the mind-identified state is problematic very problematic and very heavy so animals can teach you although we're not going back to that we go beyond thought but we meet the animal in that state of connectedness to the totality watch how a cat walks when a cat enters new territory goes up the hill or around a corner how it looks it just looks, there's no mental labels and then it usually does the right thing it either doesn't go further or it does and then it walks it's not in a hurry then it stops beautiful no problems, no conceptualized sense of self no role-playing no psychological need for future or the bird, how it moves flies, looks, totally present so that is the state of no mind we are moving beyond mind the animal is pre-mind although television is very useful if you want to learn about human madness I recommend that you don't switch on your television this weekend unless it's a spiritual practice needless to say alcohol would not be advisable while you're here it can too easily pull you back into mind and unconsciousness when you're completely conscious when it's completely emerged that state, it doesn't matter anymore not that you would drink very much so you refrain from that newspapers, no are you missing something important, no books, well perhaps reading one page or two pages in a book that has come out of presence is okay not a book that feeds your mind a book that when you open it up you read a page, half a page even a few lines and immediately you enter the state of presence those are the kinds of books that you could occasionally open if you

have one but other kinds are not needed this weekend eventually you will be your budget, book budget will become greatly curtailed when you don't need to buy useless books anymore you just go into the book shop and open a book and read a few lines and then you'll know we will also have some periods of stillness or silence, noble silence and I would suggest that nothing here is compulsory this is a very easy meditation retreat not a boot camp I would suggest that you refrain from speaking for the rest of the evening just a suggestion when you go to bed, connect with the inner body you lie on your back instead of being in here in thought, in the head sense the entire energy field of the body as you lie there no problems there so attention is taken away from thought some thoughts will come here and there it's presence every cell of the body participates in the state of presence present with every cell of the body alive and then at some point you may go to sleep from that state and when you wake up in the morning first thing, connect with the inner body and stay there for a while when you talk to people at breakfast listen, sense the inner body as you listen so that you can listen in the state of stillness what a gift that spaciousness you're receiving that other human being seemingly other human being in the field of spacious stillness perhaps you'll say something suddenly words will come out of your mouth out of that state some people noticed that more often than not when we have retreats the weather is bad it's amazing most of the time that seems to be the case often it improves on the last day one or two people said that not until the last person surrenders totally does the weather improve bad weather, so called bad weather there's nothing really bad about it is more helpful for all purposes than good weather bad weather means nothing to do, can't go anywhere here we are trapped no TV even no newspapers this is dreadful and I came, says the mind half way around the world in some cases to be trapped here in this place in bad weather I was looking for spiritual experience unlimited realization and what do I find limitation wherever I look could be worse you could be in a Zen monastery sitting there facing a wall meditating meditating or sitting in front of a bare wall in an unheated room on an empty stomach extreme limitation but this is enough what we have here why is that helpful bad weather and we can expand that bad weather, using the term metaphorically most people have become liberated at a time of bad weather in a wider sense not of sunshine and all wonderful and great and let's have some fun and let's have a good time and go out there they didn't become liberated when they've just won 10 million dollars US in the lottery maybe more likely when the bad weather came and they lost their 10 million dollars a lot of people's motivation in life is to escape from limitation and continuously they encounter more limitation because they are here as a body that's already a limitation they were born as a body and no matter what situation you go into where you go sooner or later and often sooner you encounter some form of limitation and that's to do with moving in this world of form as a form now many people believe that enough money would eventually free them from limitation because you can hop on a plane go anywhere, do anything buy anything and so if they achieve that sooner or later some other form of limitation will come into their lives to do with a physical body to do with relationships to do with the world of form that takes up all their attention

because they have to keep their money making going so the search for freedom through that can in itself become an extreme limitation the very thing that you were seeking to make you free keeps you in bondage you become involved in business enterprise the aim is freedom of course, unlimited being knowing yourself as that and then you get trapped more and more so you can continuously watch as you move here as a physical form how you encounter different kinds of limitations in life and what do you do with the mind it seeks to escape from it because the limitation is encountered in the field of now and the mind therefore seeks to escape from that it seeks a future that is free of limitation when the future comes it comes as the now with its limitations of form that's not taught at school the most primordial fact of human existence nobody seems to know it so if you are continuously running away from limitation into the future that becomes very frustrating you never get there how do you know yourself as unlimited which is in essence who you are consciousness unlimited finding itself suddenly trapped in this little physical form surrounded by other forms that impinge upon this form other physical bodies, structures, weather and everywhere you knock into something and so that is called suffering and why is it when you go to a say a monastery or whatever kind often they impose even more limitations on you can't do this, can't do that food limitations drink limitations, sleep limitations dress limitations relationship limitations sexual limitations what is a little known fact the limitations that are part of being here as a form are potentially that which takes you beyond form not seeking to run away from them when they come to embrace them fully I sometimes use the expression surrender to what is more often than not what is is some form of limitation so surrender to the isness of this moment which is the form that this moment takes which is because it is form some limitation so to seek for your unlimited essential nature away from the world of limitations of form doesn't seem to work because you would continuously be projecting an ideal state to be achieved that you want to reach never quite getting there that ideal state of enlightenment or liberation eludes you liberation ahh and what is a little known fact is liberation is not outside of the world of form some imaginary realm of perfection but the doorway into liberation is precisely through the limitations of the world of form otherwise the universe would be some malevolent place that is here to make your life difficult if not impossible and it's not it's not fair wherever I go there's something that's not right that limits me it's not fair God must be enjoying the suffering but the purpose in all that is liberation the hidden within the limitations that you encounter is the doorway and so I use the expression surrender a slightly different perspective on this an early 20th century teacher used the expression suffer consciously suffer consciously if you can't surrender totally which would be the end of suffering at least you can suffer consciously say yes to the suffering if suffering arises it could be a physical condition it could be you're trapped somewhere take an extremely simple example you are in a lift, elevator to some of you and suddenly air stops in between floors a relatively insignificant example of limitation unless you run out of air and it's the time of your death and it becomes more significant you're trapped in an elevator of course you take the necessary steps to get out you ring the bell maybe there's no answer and there you are fear

perhaps arises contraction is there enough air in here how long can I survive in here and then suffering that's one form of limitation and how do you bring consciousness to that it means you accept the condition, internal and external of that moment, including the pain, whatever form it is that you feel and face it and embrace it fully not wanting to run away from it the very fear your heart beating you're suffering consciously and that's an enormous change, the whole situation is now generating inside of you is generating consciousness the resistance is being transmuted into awareness, consciousness that's amazing it's through the trap it's actually the doorway what looks like the greatest obstacle in your life is the greatest doorway and if in some people's lives there seem to be many little and major, little and not so little obstacles, all kinds of things that impinge upon you in other people's lives they may encounter at some point in their life one big limitation it could have something to do with your body it could have something to do with your life situation or your finances losing everything, your home some big limitation in your life suddenly and that goes on for a long time that is the one overriding limitation in your life it looks the one thing that is making your life miserable and unprofitable and you can't get out of it that is the potential that is the real doorway suffer consciously so it's through totally accepting the limitations of form when they come that you know yourself as the formless one that is beyond form formless consciousness form is there to drive you to that state of surrender form is not there to please you to make your life happy if you've lived for long enough you will know that no form can do that for very long make your life happy make you happy no person no condition no situation no place can do that for long and for some people it's the physical body for others it's their financial condition for others it's relationships that appear appear as the greatest limitation so in a Zen monastery what life really does to you here to everybody they try to intensify that because they have seen the mechanism how liberation works it works through encountering extreme limitation and then total surrender suffer consciously or surrender totally so they want to produce a situation where you encounter extreme limitation facing a wall cold, hungry, nothing to do normally this would lead to feeling very miserable and many people in Zen monasteries are feeling very miserable and rarely it works even there it's rare the greatest obstacle is although the setting is right the greatest obstacle is there's somebody sitting here who wants to achieve a particular state there's somebody sitting here who wants to get somewhere and he or she is the obstacle the situation is already ideal for liberation but then there's somebody here who wants something still wants something and so even there it's rare you may have seen some people in India sadhus who impose extreme limitations on themselves at first it looks a bit mad some may be mad they might stand on one leg for 10 years one hasn't lowered his left arm in 12 years whatever it is self-imposed extreme forms of limitation suffering and at first sight it looks, this is mad, why are they doing this and occasionally even there, rarely that can also work rarely because usually there's somebody who builds an identity around it another conceptualized sense of self is the sadhu, me but this if the extreme limitation is totally embraced suddenly you know yourself is unlimited this enormous, vast, deep peace that comes with that that is the state of non-resistance

to the limitations internally externally you do what you have to do you're in the lift and you press the button to get out but in the meantime you're there that's the reality of this moment non-resistance and there's a stream of enormous power suddenly so especially on this retreat welcome all the limitations and most of them will be little although one or two people are unwell here so there's a little bit more of a limitation this body itself wasn't well yesterday and today is recovering another limitation and welcome whatever form limitation you encounter in this moment thank you the more the better, but you don't need to say that it does not matter it does not mean that you lose balance in your life that you now become totally passive you are still here as this form and as a form identity yes, you can try to improve your life you can try to learn new things you can explore new things improve your life situation your home your job your skills there's nothing wrong with that the only thing where it doesn't work is to fulfill you never for long and no matter where you improve your life and how you improve your life this is fine everywhere you encounter some new form of limitation once you know that it doesn't matter anymore, it's fine oh, here's another limitation it will come your very success will limit you in some other way I encountered the same as this form years ago all the teaching was very personal I answered the phone people would talk to me I would talk to them for an hour on the phone one on one people could come at any time then the phone started ringing more and more and I realized the limitations of this form if I answer all the phone calls I'll be on the phone 24 hours a day and then people wanting to see me alone more and more and if I see them all, it's impossible there's the limitations of this form there were other limitations then there was no money I couldn't travel from here to there I had to stay in one place I couldn't buy a computer to write my book not even a second hand one not that I would have known how to use it but I might have learned so the book had to be written with a pen that was fine but people said, how can you do that it would be so much easier if you had just a computer to do so much well, that was the limitation and then when you move into another situation the teaching has expanded it's expanding continuously but as a form identity the very expansion will confront you with other limitations your very so-called success becomes a limitation in another field and that is inescapable as long as you are here as a physical form doesn't mean do nothing anymore no, go and do explore phenomenal existence the dance of it participate in the dance of phenomenal existence it never stops but know its limitations realize the realm of the unlimited is not to be found here it's within and whereas before the world of form was a frustrating place as you now accept the limitations of form it becomes quite a pleasant place quite nice not a place that can excite you I've made it and then, oh no gain and loss no, quite pleasant ok the dance of form, they come and go but your the greatest spiritual teaching teacher that you have is the limitations that you encounter you encounter them anyway and when you sense perhaps for the first time an incredible inner freedom from outer conditions let's go back to the simple or trivial example of being stuck in a lift and suddenly you say totally yes to that moment perhaps there's still a wave of suffering and that is faced totally and suddenly there's an enormous sense of spaciousness and freedom and a sweetness and a peace and there

you are in this little box and you smile

[Speaker 2] (1:45:58 - 1:45:59)

wow

[Speaker 1] (1:46:02 - 3:26:18)

this is strange the mind won't understand that how can I be so joyful in this situation and I've seen people in wheelchairs who couldn't move a limb anymore who had surrendered and there was a light shining through their eyes no suffering entity left their greatest limitation became the doorway into freedom freedom ultimately from external conditions so embracing suffering consciously surrendering or embracing suffering consciously erodes the false conceptualized sense of self in you it is a resistant sense of self it cannot survive when there is non-resistance the egoic sense of self it's so simple and people say how do I get free of ego you get free of ego now this moment embrace it whatever form it takes embrace it internally and externally embrace what is externally and internally welcome it that's the end of ego that's the end of the false self the end of self in Buddhist terms that's all so the end of ego, the end of self is now can only be now not some future state to be achieved through hard work but because really the ego gets back in there and says I need to achieve to become the biggest liberated and most enlightened ego in the world I have a younger half-brother he is in his early thirties and as he was growing up we would occasionally meet we never lived together but I would often see him once or twice a year I could see how his ego developed how his sense of self became more and more rigid because he had to play roles in life he thought there was no other way so he became more and more identified with the roles he was playing and the rigidity came in and an uncontinuous unease normal in other words normal existence but I could just observe how that grew and then he didn't want to get into relationships it's too complicated don't want to know I'm beyond that didn't want to get too involved in life either no, I'll stand back I'll just do what I have to do and then suddenly he encountered a huge serious illness in his late twenties life threatening so an enormous limitation was suddenly there the operation was successful but the operation left behind certain dysfunctions in the body so that although the operation was successful he now wakes up almost every night in the middle of the night he wakes up in acute abdominal pain because they had to rearrange his intestines somehow they don't fit together anymore so well so almost every night he's awake for 2 or 3 hours in extreme pain and they can't do anything about it and that goes on and on and then I met him again not long ago, in December and a change had come over him there was a simplicity and a sweetness and an openness where was his ego? it was on its way out the rigidity was gone there was great openness and lightness and then he told me about the pain and then I knew that that pain was his teacher and at some point he must have started to surrender to it and it's in other words he suffered consciously when you surrender to suffering you suffer consciously and that very quickly eroded the ego the

false self it cannot survive when you suffer consciously when you surrender for some people that's the teacher it might be physical pain miracles of healing also happen when total surrender happens so it may go away a point may come when suddenly it's gone because it served its purpose and it's gone in the meantime it's there and it works as a physical vehicle you will never escape the limitations as the physical form the Buddha, so the story goes died of food poisoning and that must be true because it's not a flattering story there are many legends around the life of the Buddha that came over the centuries to make him into a supernatural super human being but this is so unflattering that it must be true because he was a human being who achieved liberation and yet there were the limitations of the physical form still there it didn't matter anymore I believe the story even says that he knew that this food was no good that somebody offered and yet he said yes again there's a little symbolic teaching here I'm not saying do that embracing suffering consciously and what other is the image of Jesus on the cross the very central image of Christianity is to embrace at first it's an extreme form of limitation the most extreme you could possibly envisage to be nailed to a cross the most extreme form of human limitation and then there is the total surrender there's the conscious totally conscious suffering total acceptance of that limitation pointed to in the words I surrender well it's not my will but thy will be done the will of the totality not me, a little me and so whether you're a Christian or not doesn't matter I'm saying there is wisdom embodied in the central image of Christianity and that is suffer consciously the most extreme limitation is the doorway so the cross is the symbol of torture but also the symbol of freedom of the divine they have taken the worst thing that seems the worst obstacle and made it into a symbol for both liberation and bondage one not separate so that wisdom could not be expressed in words nobody would have understood now people do but a thousand years, two thousand years ago if you had said liberation and bondage are one they would have said what's that, what's bondage, what's liberation the wisdom was embodied in the image and it's very powerful so there is a transcendent truth there too, it's everywhere wherever you look that is the truth and so there is an expression Jesus used the expression take up your cross and follow me follow me is go the same way as me enter the same state of consciousness take up your cross willingly I would add that's what he said it's not there, they forgot that word take up your cross willingly and then you follow me take up your crosses, embrace suffering as it arises and then it's transmuted suffering becomes consciousness limitation becomes the unlimited so here unfortunately we only have very small forms of limitation bad weather it's clearing up as we surrender another strange thing that happens is with complete acceptance of limitations they change very quickly they only stay around as long as you resist them and then they go away and then perhaps at some point another one comes life always will test you so to speak but as you surrender the biggest limitation very often dissolves but that's not why you surrender then it doesn't work because you want it to go away healing the most powerful healer is the state of surrender does not mean you surrender to the idea that you are ill a conceptualized idea in the head you simply surrender to the form that this moment takes pain, discomfort, vomiting whatever it is that's the form

that this moment takes and it is and healing happens quickly through that a byproduct no more so conditions in your life are always ideal for spiritual practice always in the now surrender takes you beyond suffering as long as there is suffering bring consciousness to it it's a very powerful practice the person who used that expression for the first time was called Gurdjieff early 20th century teacher who used that expression suffer consciously and he was a strange man did strange things he made people work for hours on end digging a hole and then filling it up again and then digging another hole that was the way he was teaching to suffer consciously that's not my way fortunately use what life brings to you that's enough if you seek out suffering the ego is back in some subtle way it wants something through it so use what life brings to you in this moment and accept beautifully put I quote him in the book the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius who lived 2000 years ago one of the rare examples of enlightened rulers or kings he wrote he said accept all that comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs accept all that comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny woven as a fabric of interconnectedness of the whole and the form that this moment takes is the only form it could take for you at this moment it is the whole expressing itself as this at this moment the totality including the whole of the past history has brought this moment about so there is a web of interconnectedness that's what he meant woven in the pattern of your destiny and this this now is part of the web of interconnectedness of the entire universe for what could more aptly fit your needs than whatever is happening at this moment there is a total correspondence between what you need and what is happening to you laughing oh no this can't be right no no there's one spiritual teacher who she taught me she developed a new mantra that she teaches her students and that mantra is this too this also this too whatever appears is included in the surrender practice otherwise the mind would come in and say everything but not this this too as things arise this too beautiful mantra and then what arises is the state of peace alive peace that is freedom from good and bad out there the fluctuations of the world of form and the limitations alive the peace that you cannot understand through the mind and it's come not because limitations left you that peace is not the true peace if you have for a little while in your life limitations leave you and you feel great that could be mistaken for enlightenment you say I'm enlightened now I made 20 million dollars US of course everything is going well my life is flowing freely I can go anywhere, do anything I'm happy every morning for a little while you could fool yourself and then some form of limitation will come in so it is caused by some temporary relief of no limitation for a little while and then you feel great of course that's not it it comes in the midst of limitation and it often comes in the midst of loss which is another form of limitation you lose something that was important to your sense of self you lose possessions that were important to your sense of self you lose status in society that was important for your conceptualized sense of self, very painful I'm nobody, suddenly I was somebody now I'm nobody or you lose certainty your philosophical system in the head suddenly doesn't explain the universe anymore somebody close to you dies that wasn't supposed to happen some suffering comes in some loss comes in and you can't, for some people it

happens when there's collective disaster September the 11th collective disaster and suddenly we can't have explanations anymore how do we explain how does it fit into my philosophy so that could collapse also in the face of loss loss or extreme limitation disaster or death which is everywhere part of human existence in the face of that systems of explanation belief systems even suddenly don't work anymore so there's a loss of that some religious people lose their belief when suddenly something drastically goes wrong in their lives I don't believe in God anymore I had a contract with God I went to church every Sunday and he was supposed to look after me there was no disaster wasn't supposed to happen loss is not supposed to happen I signed the contract with God but it doesn't work it's a very limited and childish way of relating to God you can't relate to God anyway because you are the divine so something suddenly is the loss that which gave you your sense of self goes shaky first it's shaky and then crumbles the greatest blessing in your life is that that which is regarded as the greatest curse that which everybody everybody fears that someday I will have to face that of course you will someday, great loss, great limitation I'm going to have to face that yes, this is the physical vehicle at some point it will crumble it'll wither like a flower and then and the whole construct of your life situation also with it the story of me suddenly winds down the film has come to an end and probably not a happy ending just suddenly somebody cuts the greatest that which everybody fears great loss is the greatest opening if you know what to do with it so you work on all levels on the little levels, even of bad weather and then larger things, larger limitations that come to you continuous if you work on the small levels with bringing surrender and acceptance or suffer consciously then the larger will be very much easier when they come they may not even come in drastic forms anymore because life only gives you what you need and here you involuntarily embrace the end of the false self as you sit here you came here voluntarily even if somebody dragged you here somehow you must still have said on some level OK, I'll come and this is a voluntary embrace of what otherwise people only encounter through disaster great limitation severe loss that which redeems humans from the human condition is that which is considered very bad and you can see again how good and bad are one the cross, good, symbol of bondage symbol of liberation, one Shakespeare pointed out nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so the oneness so you no longer divide life into good and bad just one the bad is good the good is bad one it is a return to oneness how did we get thrown out of paradise Adam and Eve according to the myth they ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil that was the end of paradise that's what it says they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil good, bad the arising of thought which at first was nice enormous evolutionary advance and then gradually getting trapped in thought in a conceptualized world and then going beyond as the next stage because all thought is judgment, good, bad and when I speak of suffering consciously accepting what is all that is also the ending of compulsive thinking the ending of being trapped in a continuous stream of thought we are moving beyond thought true intelligence is not within thought thought is a limited expression of intelligence very small there is vast intelligence beyond thought and most of that

operates in stillness forms are born out of that a flower or a galaxy a galaxy, for those of you who don't know astronomy is millions and millions of suns and planets forming an island universe billions of suns luminous vast and there are millions and millions of galaxies in the universe and that also is born out of that infinite intelligence gives birth to that expresses itself as form or a flower if you went into outer space in outer space there is not a single noise there the noise is on the human level mostly deep stillness even if a star explodes it explodes in total silence there is no sound there the flower grows in silence and stillness the tree grows in silence and stillness and it's beautiful and that is the one intelligence that you are, the essence of your being so there you are as a galaxy as a flower and the doorway into knowing yourself as that is to accept the limitations of form totally that transformation of consciousness if we can call it that that's why you are here for this flowering to happen through this form everything else is secondary in your life and it doesn't matter that much what life situation you are in as it happens you could be sitting in a palace or prison cell it can happen there prison cell more likely than the palace but palace, possible too or you could be sitting on a bus or in a Rolls Royce it's irrelevant your life purpose is to know yourself as that one intelligence but you can't know yourself as subject-object relationship in the way that you know another person or flower or tree you know yourself there's no duality in that the essence it is you are the essence of all knowing it makes thought possible it makes sense perception possible it's the consciousness formless here, now as it says in the Upanishads not that which the mind thinks but that whereby the mind can think know that alone to be the eternal Brahman not what people here adore not that which the ear hears but that whereby the ear can hear know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal not what people here adore not that which the eye sees but that whereby the eye can see know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal not what people here adore what people here adore is a form what you can see or hear think but that which makes seeing and hearing and thinking possible that which underlies the entire universe the unmanifested one the sound of the bell follow the sound with your attention and then when the sound has subsided there's simply the field of alertness left stillness was there before the sound stillness is there after the sound and stillness is there during the sound so while you listen to the sound and the sound is only one example for your entire existence because this is form, the sound is form and now what is the relationship between form and the formless that's the only true question knowing, now almost everybody is lost in form they see only the forms they think only the forms, which is thought forms they react to the forms they live in a little form identity, a me so people are lost in form they are lost in their mind mind forms, thoughts they are lost in the forms the physical forms, they're so important everything is so important they fear these forms, they want those forms they know nothing but form and even God, those who believe in God know God as an idea in the head a form, a thought I believe, and they have a few little other beliefs around that another form this is why in the Upanishads it says not what people here adore what people here adore is some form, some mental image of God or they might have even a physical image so they don't know God God is the one formless

unmanifested life and people it's the essence of each form but people don't know it so here we have this bell the sound of the bell is form that arises and even while you listen to the sound be aware of that which is listening or let's put it in another way be aware of the field in which the sound happens the space in which the sound happens the being underneath the existence of the sound existence is to do with the word of form to exist, from Latin means to stand out to be a form exist, stand out everything that exists exists as a form being is prior to existence so while you listen there is the field in which the sound happens and the sound or there is the alertness the alert attention and the sound if in any experience that you have you are aware of the field in which the experience happens then you are not trapped in the world of form you allow it but you are free when this becomes your normal state one could say that what's there is always less important than what's not there an enigmatic statement what is there is always less important than what is not there to put it in other words slightly less enigmatic there is a peace around everything that happens and you are not dependent on what happens or doesn't happen of course we are speaking we never speak of anything else but God realization I don't use that word very often because it's associated with a mental image a mental idol and if you are a Buddhist the word God may be distasteful to you that's alright that's a limitation also of course when I ring these bells while you listen to the sound you can also be aware and I'll put it in slightly I often talk about the same thing you might have noticed using certain words and then certain other words because some words work for some people different perspectives on the same when I ring these bells usually you would be aware of the sound if you are lucky if you are trapped in thinking the sound would be peripheral that's the sound but without awareness there would be no sound the essential ingredient here to make the experience of the sound possible is the awareness awareness is the field in which the sound happens awareness is you the essence so what we have here when you know that you know the sound and you know yourself as the aware presence in which the sound happens in other words you are becoming aware of awareness now when this is expressed through language it sounds dualistic but it is not another way of putting it is awareness becomes self-aware awareness of awareness and as that deepens that field of presence or awareness which is unmanifested becomes vaster is vaster than anything that happens in the world the world is a surface phenomenon ripples I sometimes call it ripples on the surface of being and this being there is an acceleration of consciousness happening what you are hearing here in two hours or a few hours you would have had to spend 40 years in a monastery before to get it and once a year the teacher would make one enigmatic statement and here you are getting the cream of it concentrated that's what's needed in this mad world now this teaching is not only the words that's the manifested part of the teaching and then there's the unmanifested part of the teaching and that is one could say the energy field of presence it's not where it has no form there's the energy field out of which the teaching comes that's the real teaching nothing personal in that it's there in the absence of the illusion of a person it's there spiritual realization is nobody's attainment it's there because the person has seen itself as a delusion and therefore has become transparent

the density of the delusion is gone so it's not the delusion will try to claim perhaps some attainment that's not how it is so it's becoming more and more transparent to consciousness the unmanifested God we will meet again when the hands of the clock indicate 3.30 and it will be the now again same field as this just the same the sun is coming out surrender has happened I'm told that you've been eating a lot more more the retreats, most of them have become very big this one is still relatively small here the last one in New York we had 350 or 380 people for one week it was no longer possible to hug everybody but here it's still possible those who want it and so tomorrow that will be part of our retreat hugging is more than a physical meeting it's a sacred encounter every encounter is sacred when the heaviness of the person is out of the way the density of the mind created person and you're always encountering yourself don't make a form identity out of the transparency that means when you live in surrender every moment you become transparent to the light of consciousness it shines through that is nobody's form identity it's not something other than you when you recognize in what seems like another person you perhaps feel drawn to it what you're really recognizing is your own essence reflected back to you it's never the other there's nobody greater than you or less than you in essence it's only a question to what extent that divine essence is obscured nobody is more or less divine closer to god but it may be obscured by mind mind identification and the mind made self so even the great scientist Albert Einstein who was also a mystic said the value of a human being is determined by the degree to which he or she is free of self so in any teacher is a reflection of yourself when you look at the photo of a teacher sometimes that can put you in a state of presence it's strange it's only a piece of paper a photo and if that photo shows a form that is transparent it can bring you into that state that you are contemplating but you're not the mind may make it into another identity, somebody who is higher than you or more advanced than you that's not how it is it's you so here we have the beautiful truth it seems to contradict buddhism but it doesn't there's only one self buddhism says there's no self but it speaks of the false sense of self there's only one self appearing in many seemingly a multitude of forms underlying the multiplicity there is the one and that does not only apply to human beings any form is a manifestation an expression of the one and you begin to know that oneness when you look upon a form without the interference of conceptualizing and labeling thought that separates you thought creates the sense of separation you have labeled it you have judged it you have adopted a perspective a position towards it a me and it's harsh the judgments of the mind are harsh but when you look upon something in that simple thoughtless awareness there's a gentleness which is an aspect of love because whatever you look upon you recognize as in essence yourself so you encounter yourself in essence so you recognize the oneness inherent in all forms oneness with who you are that is the true meaning of love you then look lovingly upon the world and act lovingly interact lovingly with the world and with other humans free of seeking either to protect or enhance your illusory fictitious sense of self conceptualized in the head if that motivates you self-protection and self-enhancement then there is no love you might talk about it but that's not it's the opposite as my friend

Katie says personalities don't love they want something they may pretend that they love and this is beautiful when the need to protect yourself the psychological me or to feed it strengthen it through adding more through other people things, ideas making them part of your sense of self that need isn't there anymore and you are free you don't fear the world and you don't need the world psychologically so that's the end of fear and desire what all the teachings speak of Buddha, desire, the end of desire that there cannot be the end of desire if you continue as a mentalized conceptualized sense of self and try to be free of desire you'll never reach there that's why so many people get stuck trying to get somewhere in their spiritual practice not knowing that what they are really trying to do is enhance their sense of self and the spiritual practice itself becomes more desire to add to me and all they have forgotten is the now and the completeness and the fullness of life that is already here, now but they fear it the now, because in the now the false self collapses don't look at now just as they don't look at now they don't look at death don't talk about it it doesn't exist because the now is the death of the false self and here we are submitting to that death even as we sit here that's no merit of yours it's an evolutionary movement an evolutionary impulse that's why it becomes possible now no personal merit in it somehow, for some reason the evolutionary impulse moves through these forms here and of course it is more than just becoming free of unhappiness just becoming free of the unhappy me the burden of self with its continuous problems problem making the heaviness of that it goes beyond that it is in essence sacred the true realm of the sacred the sacred is the present moment nowhere else and when your attention moves into the present moment away from past future then you notice there is a sacredness about the present moment then you notice and I use these words very rarely and don't hang on to the words God is present here and now there is divine presence the divine is within and without no matter what form the now takes even if death is happening in the now which the mind would judge as bad it's sacred very sacred death is the transition from form to the formless a doorway a form dissolves that's called death every form is destined to dissolve and that moment of transition is called death and in that moment that which is beyond the form even in the heaviest of forms let's say a person who has never all his or her life was totally self-obsessed in the moment of death something shines through of the formless as the form dissolves God shines through the form even the heaviest form in the moment of death the most sacred thing about life is death not only the death of the physical form more beautifully even the death of the psychological form of me the death of the self this is why our gathering is beautiful because we are celebrating that death here or dying before the physical body dies that's why it is said I believe it is the Koran or another book close to it it speaks of die before you die sometimes translated as find death before death finds you because it's looking for you and rather than run away from it you say, oh, there you are it's a little bit like when you are in a nightmare a monster is running to catch you you are running away from some monstrous presence and suddenly you turn around and face the monster and it's transformed into a benign figure because it's faced and death is the same face death now die before you die and find that there is no death only forms

become dissolved the essence is deathless so it's important to realize that life is eternal life is beyond forms of life life is one life is eternal and life has no opposite people believe that death is the opposite of life of course that's not the case death is the opposite of birth not life surrender is facing death consciously it could be a little thing you have a little illness and you surrender into that not the illness the condition now you don't surrender to an illness that's a concept in the head well I'm ill and I might as well accept that I'm ill you are just strengthening more belief systems and you get trapped in no, what you surrender to is the condition of this moment relax into it even if it's pain or discomfort so conscious suffering in this way very quickly takes you beyond suffering transmutes you're dying the self is dying it's not protesting anymore so it's dying it's not complaining anymore so it's dying it's not running to the future anymore to grasp things, to add to itself to make itself bigger so it's dying and then in that death and to some people it comes violently so dreadful loss the most dreadful thing that a human being could encounter and there suddenly it happens and to you it's coming gently you may have had your disasters already that's why you've come here in order to complete your dying you may already have started to die through some disaster or other in your life through some great loss or other in your life and you come here to complete that process of dying to the false self even before you're completely dead as a false self already a light shines through you there's already the beginning of a transparency I could see that I mentioned earlier when I saw my brother again a month ago after three years the pain that he suffers almost every night that he surrendered to has started to erode his false self the process is not yet complete but the light is shining through already and so you regain as that shines through you regain your state of original innocence original sin means the human madness unconsciousness that everybody inherits nothing personal even in that it's original sin it's just one way of looking at it it could be called unconsciousness it could be called delusion it's the same now each human being carries still within the remnants what's left over of original sin within the collective of humanity the entire planet there's a heaviness enveloping the planet that is connected with human pain over thousands and thousands of years pain that humans inflicted on each other in their madness in not knowing who they are in seeking to enhance their delusory sense of self often collective sense of self which is even more mad than the personal sense of self us against them a collective ego is only one thing more mad than the personal sense of ego that is a collective sense of ego if you look at the evil in the world what's perpetrated by criminals is negligible it's almost nothing compared to the evil that collective groups nations, tribes, religions inflict on each other and they're all respectable citizens it's negligible what criminals do compared to what ideologies do an ideology is a head construction it's part of deriving your sense of collective identity from a mind-made sense of self which includes its mental positions and its belief systems and from that you derive your identity as us and then it seeks to kill the others to strengthen itself in some way it needs to remain in a position of right and wrong we are right, they are wrong a total inability to see any other perspective than the one mental perspective that you have identified with and so that's the madness

of the world egoic madness and you don't even know what you're doing anymore in that madness completely unconscious you could kill a million people and you will conceptualize it you will label those million people that you kill put a label on completely deadened now to the reality through mental conceptualization you deadened yourself all things like racism are based on putting labels on so that you deadened yourself to the aliveness of that being and your own so that's the madness of the planet yes anybody who looks at human history and the more recent the more mad in terms of numbers of people killed if you look at human history you would see this planet must be mad not totally but about 90% and that is the dysfunction the unconsciousness which is becoming more and more apparent but as we are approaching the end of this evolutionary stage we have to go through it it's fine but that is left over on the planet and in each human being a residue, an energetic residue of human pain many of you know this already from your own life what I call the pain body is human pain that you carry, emotional pain that is not yours as such it's human pain the heaviness of that your share of that pain and that's what humans carry inside and that's what comes up periodically and tries to feed on more pain something in you wants more pain so that's another way of looking at it is there is in you it's not there all the time periodically it comes up periods come when it seems it looks as if you wanted a painful experience it looks like an addiction to pain you can easily see it when you look at couples how they live two people living together how periodically they are forced to reenact painful drama in their relationship almost you could time it in some relationships it's every three days in others it's every two weeks once a month or three times a day pain body is dormant or active it cannot stay dormant for too long it needs to feed on more pain pain body is the energetic residue of human pain created by egoic madness over millennia and what we see as the pollution of the planet poisoning of nature everywhere is only the external manifestation of that underlying heaviness and pollution in the collective human psyche so most of you will know that the pain body is in you periodically needs to feed it will then look for a trigger so that it can come up a thought or somebody around you says something or does something and it uses that as a trigger or an event, something goes wrong a little thing but there's a huge pain reaction to that little thing so whenever there's a huge pain reaction with a relatively insignificant trigger you can be sure that that is the pain body a thought is enough when the pain body is ready to awaken one thought will trigger it about yourself me and my unhappy story and then the emotional field moves into the mind into the brain and feeds on your thinking negative thinking fearful thinking angry thinking whatever the predominant energy vibration of the pain body is it will feed on that kind of thinking it energizes and amplifies the conceptual sense of self in the head which is problematic and unhappy anyway but becomes even more problematic and more unhappy when it's energized by collective human pain that lives in you part of it is of course added to in your childhood all things get added to that there's a personal aspect and a collective aspect but then that flows into the sense of self the sense of self becomes extremely heavy and extremely charged with human pain and that's what people live with and then they act it out it feeds on your thinking and it

will try to feed on other people in other words you're trying to get some pain back from others it's not enough for you to be unhappy you want others to be unhappy too nothing personal in it it's a mechanical thing and usually it works in a relationship you can feed on your partner's reaction he or she also has a pain body so one pain body can easily trigger another person's pain body so it renews itself through other people and their reactions and it also renews itself through your thought processes if you're a hermit it can only renew itself through your thought processes so periodically you go through depression about being a hermit and say my life is pointless why did I ever become a hermit this is dreadful self talk how dreadful it all is most people are not hermits so the pain body spreads to others an interesting fact is when your pain body is active and it can remain active in some people for a few hours even a few days in some people before it has taken on enough food to go back to its dormant state when it's active you could walk into a shop and you're not saying much you're just buying something and suddenly the shopkeeper is aggressive towards you because his pain body recognizes your pain body and suddenly they interact because pain bodies recognize each other so a walking pain body will very easily attract pain into his or her life because it is recognized by other pain bodies and there are many people in the world who are walking pain bodies who perhaps even 50% of the time have an active pain body or more up to 100% but that is close to madness but not uncommon and then you come back from the shop I don't know what happened there I got into this huge argument he just attacked me he said he was rude and that was because your pain body was emanating, it was active and was emanating that vibration and it draws in the same unconsciousness from others it's also dangerous, especially with certain pain bodies when the pain body is active you're in more danger of being attacked or even having an accident because a walking or driving pain body many pain bodies these days are behind wheels a driving pain body wants he doesn't know that he wants the accident to happen because it's pain and all that it requires many accidents happen when two pain bodies meet at an intersection and neither of them is going to stop and it works beautifully they can feed on that for a long time and also since criminal so-called criminal activity most of it is perpetrated by walking pain bodies so when your pain body is active you're actually much more vulnerable to being attacked by other unconscious people who are possessed by their pain bodies so I would therefore recommend that when your pain body is active you don't go out alone at night how do we do about this? it is human pain you carry it, you share that what can you do about it?

of course bring presence to it so that it cannot use your thought processes and feed on your thinking watch it, sense it, feel it the turbulence, the heaviness, the tightness there it is anger, fear depression, sadness and it wants to become thought because that's what it feeds on the vibration frequency of anger wants to become angry thoughts the heaviness, the sadness of depression wants to become depressed and sad thoughts about me, of course or what others did to me the angry energy field which wants to become angry thoughts what I'm going to do to them or could have done to them will do

one day so you watch it directly as an energy field so that it doesn't become a story in the head it doesn't become an entity, a me an unhappy me so you simply bring attention to it and of course acceptance here we come back to the primordial lesson it is there it is allow it to be it's not that bad it's a vibration, it's a contraction it's a heaviness all right that is an aspect of conscious suffering it's a pain body and you there it is and feel it allow it to be it's not feeding anymore it's already beginning to become transmuted the pain that's trapped in there is already being transmuted into consciousness through conscious suffering conscious suffering is not it's unconscious when you identify with a suffering entity as me that's unconsciousness a self arises out of human pain the mind manufactures a self an unhappy self most selves are unhappy at least never happy for long so that's unconsciousness and that's how it perpetuates itself continuously really that is karma the continuous perpetuation of action reaction perpetuation of unconscious patterns that you identify with as yourself inherited from the past, unconscious patterns that pretend to be a self and because they pretend to be a self they can perpetuate themselves when you recognize the non-self in the pain when you recognize the selfless nature of the pain human pain or just pain no self then the pain cannot perpetuate and feed again and again so you need to look through the pain as non-personal without rejecting it or denying it but realize that there is no self in it the pain body will want to try to get you to identify with it so that it can feed again freedom is the recognition of no self in that pain oh it's not me and then what do you do with it? you allow it to be the great transmuter if that's even a word let's use it, if it doesn't exist then recreate it the great transmuter of pain is allowing is the yes to what is because the root and the beginning of all pain and it happened a long time ago was the original no self contraction and that was the beginning of the separation from the totality so we bring the yes so that is amazing how easy it is to come to the end of the vicious circle of having to reenact again and again human pain because you believe that's a self

[Speaker 2] (3:26:20 - 3:26:21)

so

[Speaker 1] (3:26:23 - 4:30:48)

next time the pain body comes oh there it is you welcome even that you remember the mantra this too this too if you are in a relationship or you live with other people for a while I lived in a commune some years ago and I could sometimes some of the people in the commune had heavy pain bodies and occasionally when they would come down for breakfast I could already hear the sound of the steps coming down there was a pain body coming down the stairs and then the pain body was at the breakfast table looking for somebody to blame or attack a person preferably a situation and if they couldn't find anybody they would attack themselves me, not good enough failed again at everything failed at everything self-talk and then the next day the same person would come down the stairs pain body had spent the whole day feeding on other people in the commune

and then the next day great, I feel great and of course it wouldn't last so what does that look like when more consciousness comes in that person might walk down and say I can feel my pain body today it's active I feel it here there it is I feel it's angry or it's turbulent or it's heavy can you see the enormous difference between being it and allowing it to be it seems a small thing but it's enormous to step out of it and say there's the pain body and that's how it is you recognize it allow it to be and that's quite it's not feeding it will look for a moment when you are less conscious so that it can get you of course, the pain body is not stupid it survived for so long because it's clever and cunning and it knows the right moment to come in when you least suspect it sometimes a bad film on TV is enough to pull you into unconsciousness after two hours of watching rubbish or violent nonsense the pain body has already become a little bit active or very active and that's enough just two hours of TV and you are more likely to be unconscious other people watch movies to feed their pain bodies maybe 70% 75% of the entertainment industry is financed by pain bodies they pay to see the violent films why would anybody want to watch pain on the screen humans inflicting pain on other humans who would want to watch that pain bodies, they love it and the cinemas are full and the producers and the script writers they don't know what they are doing they just know this sells and the script writer is in the the pain body is responsible for the script it writes it so watch out once the pain body has linked into your mind and your thought processes it's not so easy to dislodge because you have already identified with it it's good if you detect it just as it first arises if it's already taken over your thought processes it's not so easy to get out at that time because you already identified still possible, but not so easy more possible now because there is more presence in you now but if you can catch it just as it arises and then allow it to be before it starts using your mind and your thinking it can come in, for example when there is a reaction an unconscious reaction there is a tiny opening so the pain body can flow in there even the slightest reaction you drop something or you knock into something I'm choosing the most insignificant example seemingly trivial example you drop an object it breaks and you go and at that moment if the pain body is ready it will use that little hole that opening to go in there and then suddenly there is much more than that thing that is broken or you knock into something with your elbow and I'm just...

these are tiny trivial examples but this is the mechanism you knock into something and suddenly there the pain body flows from there it carries on and it deepens and the next thing that happens then is bad also and then you are already the pain body looking for the next bad thing and it will come because now you are attracted alcohol, also a favorite way for the pain body to gain entrance when you lose consciousness through drinking one whiskey is fine the second whiskey you feel better because your mind is no longer so active and then the third you are pulled gradually into more unconsciousness and then suddenly the pain body says this is my chance as you know for many women menstruation is associated with the arising of the female pain body the pain body having a collective aspect to it a strong collective aspect female suffering, the suffering of women for thousands and thousands of years comes up at that time and you know that I

addressed it in the book briefly this is a time when great presence is required so that you can stay conscious when it comes not identify with that movement alcohol triggers many male pain bodies especially in certain countries it's more part of the collective pain bodies associated with that there are many men who become violent after a few drinks then there are pain bodies the collective aspect is also countries regions in certain countries the greatest pockets of extreme unconsciousness on the planet are where the collective pain body is most active they are pockets of enormous unconsciousness and total identification with pain body and collective mental positions and you can imagine when a collective mental position is energized by hundreds or thousands of years of accumulated pain how mad that is and just as one personal pain body can pull others around it also into unconsciousness a pocket of unconsciousness on the planet can pull potentially a large part of the planet into its own unconsciousness that's the challenge the collective challenge on our planet because as consciousness grows on the planet the madness also intensifies the two movements it's getting better and worse at the same time when you watch TV it's only getting worse but there's an underground movement and we are part of that of consciousness emerging rarely on TV I'm not going to say again it's not going to be on TV because it actually was on TV after I'd said it many times this gathering is not going to be on TV national television in Canada came to film a gathering that we were doing so I was wrong but it's still very rare for this to be on TV mostly what you watch on TV is the manifestation of unconsciousness in the news, whatever pain body the greatest teacher is the pain body it is fuel for consciousness suffering is fuel for consciousness when you suffer consciously which means accept that what you feel, accept yes like fire consuming it so you work with your pain body it's your friend, not your enemy you have no enemies an essential part of the evolution is human pain body it happens through that it seems to be the obstacle but really everything is one it's the obstacle and that which enables you to go beyond just like the cross in other words it happens in complete stillness in that field of spaciousness so you don't have to learn a technique for that just give your complete attention to any action first choose short things don't say I'm going to be attentive for the next hour and then a minute later you're gone back into the head little things and this sounds insignificant even placing an object from here to there takes perhaps 5 seconds you can do that without making that movement a means to an end there's a spacious presence drinking a glass of water usually it's a means to an end you want the water to get down here as quickly as possible into the body and then you look for the next thing and the next thing might not actually be eating or drinking it could be some other absorbing something else and if you observe the mind it looks always for the next thing to absorb so you've had the water and then maybe a sandwich and then you go to the magazine or the newspaper it's still mind stuff a lot of overeating the greed of the mind transferred into the body of more the need of the mind for more not enough and then a magazine you go flick the pages and then comes the next thing some noise switch something on to make noise and then the big one the TV and the amazing thing is often when you watch TV your mind comes to a halt and you simply switch into the group mind that takes you over some people get a

little bit of relief from watching TV because the personal level of mind comes to a stop at least they're not thinking about their problems but they're switching into the drama on the screens the group mind is taking over so my mind is switching into that and then you're living out other people's dramas whatever they do on the TV screen and so you can be in the state of hypnosis for hours and then go from one channel to another and very hard after a while wanting to be in the body to be rooted in here because your attention is flowing out continuously particularly not helpful by the way if you're ill and you watch TV that delays your healing because your attention is flowing out it belongs here in here the greatest healer is awareness, inner body awareness and now through TV it flows out and out children do it that's why their minds become so restless even at an early age looking for the next stimulus stimulus there are already one or two books out for children that contain the truth of pain body a child would very easily recognize that it just needs to be pointed out children already have pain bodies and they can very easily recognize their own pain body if it's pointed out to them what happened to you just now when you went through this tantrum what was that? who was that?

strange so gradually they begin to develop the ability to look at it give it a name perhaps not a fearful one they begin to observe their own pain body this would be subject number one at school before they even learn to read and write observe some children are listening because their parents are continuously listening to tapes of talks they are listening continuously to these tapes and some of these children they take it in because it's so simple they understand most of it they understand and what comes out of them sometimes is profound they respond to the truth presence awareness alert attention thoughtless awareness so you meet the pain body with that alert presence and that alertness is important there is a it's almost fierce in its alertness but it's also gentle both and you also meet external situations that are manifesting the earth drama you also meet that in that field of alert presence don't wait for a challenge to become alert bring the alertness in when you are not being challenged into normal sense perceptions normal activities so that nothing that you do is a means to an end there is an alertness in this movement in this now so presence grows manifests, emerges more fully then when the pain body comes there is enough presence there to meet it not to fight it to meet it in the field of alert presence without the alert presence pain body will pull you into identification with it so choose presence I say that it's not ultimately true because you are not separate from the totality choose presence whenever you can whenever you remember but you can only choose it because presence is emerging through you but that's a different matter choose presence whenever it's a perspective no perspective has the entire truth choose presence whenever you can if you only are present in extreme challenges then life will give you that if that's what you want, fine life threatening challenges then there are many people who have never heard of presence who suddenly become present when they are told they haven't got much longer to live for example or they become dreadfully unhappy or that suddenly an inner shift happens or you become present when you are engaged in some dangerous activity for some people it's the only

time when they feel alive when they are climbing the mountain or behind the wheel of a racing car completely present alive the person is gone, the self is gone but it's risky bring presence into normal activity that alertness meet the world in the state of alertness even when you are not being challenged and then you can meet the challenges which may come from within as the pain body or from without as some kind of manifestation of the madness of this world you can't run away from that it will come at you you face it somewhere in your life on this planet you can go into the monastery and you will encounter also the ego of course it's there the ego doesn't say I'm not going into the monastery so you'll encounter it and that is don't wait for the challenges but challenge can then intensify it when it comes, it's beautiful any challenge, inner or outer, is beautiful because it intensifies presence once a certain degree of presence has been reached before a certain degree of presence has been reached the challenge will pull you into unconsciousness reactivity of the self acting out conditioned patterns reacting out of those conditioned patterns to the situation and making it worse of course contributing to the unconsciousness of the world creating more madness and more pain and complaining about other unconscious people in the process so once a certain degree of presence is reached any challenge will intensify presence before that any challenge makes you more unconscious once the challenge intensifies presence then really it means nothing bad can happen to you anymore because whatever happens brings about more presence but choose presence even in the absence of challenges and see how that also is vital because it transforms the way in which you relate to the world around you to people, to nature how it deepens all that when you bring presence to your sense perceptions look listen sense, feel in that clear still field of alertness the depth and beauty that is there when you contemplate nature in that state of consciousness at the sacredness remember the Zen master who only taught by raising his finger when asked what is Zen he became famous because he never gave any explanation except this that's all I haven't done this for a while can you please explain to us the meaning of Zen and how it's related to other spiritual practices and particularly Buddhist schools and blah blah blah some people got it thank you and others asked did you hear my question and then they went home and said he gave me no teaching at all nothing to say that is the essence of our gathering is that state of consciousness in which you know yourself as the awareness that makes the whole world of form possible you know yourself as that field directly and now the world is secondary awareness is primary that means you are free you are free of the world and now you can interact with the world in a very different way when you are free of the world you become a blessing in the world only those who are free of the world are a true blessing in this world of form because they don't need it anymore and they don't fear it anymore awareness as the underlying field that's who you are the rest is the world of form including thoughts including your life situation as it unfolds from past to future like a little drama, film comings and goings the identity isn't in that awareness so the rest is details as Einstein said I want to know the mind of God Einstein said the rest is details and what does that mean the mind of God, I don't know what he meant by it he had deep mystical insights the mind of God is

consciousness now whether he really knew what he was saying or whether it was simply an intuitive thing that came through him who knows but it is the truth he knew what matters perhaps he was still looking for an answer in the realm of thought largely and of course in the realm of thought you cannot know the mind of God because all thought is form temporary awareness nothing is separate from that thought is not separate from it but you have to know it directly you cannot know it through something if there are any questions left we may look at them this evening there may be no questions left I know you are not impatiently waiting for me to speak because the psychological need for future is going away the rootedness in now place of great power and aliveness the psychological need for the next moment is gone of course the next moment comes not as the next moment it comes as the now psychological need for the next moment to be home then nothing is a means to an end you don't reduce any action any movement to a means to an end it is not inferior the now to some future moment in the service of some future moment it's mad that's how everybody lives they make the now inferior to an imagined projection mental abstraction they want to get to the only place where life is reduced to a means to an end all dealings with people become mostly means to an end business transactions there is nothing wrong with business as such you can bring to a business transaction the field of presence there is the transaction I give you this you give me that and there is the field of aware presence in which it happens you are aware of that awareness of that field that's what really matters and in it that movement happens otherwise you lose yourself in the movement in the doing, in the action and that's how everybody lives and then when you lose yourself in the doing you give it an importance that it doesn't have you give the world an importance that it doesn't have so what that means really is you bring a stillness into all interactions because when it's not a means to an end stillness arises and that's the most important part of the business interaction if it is a business the meeting not the little thing that's happening the vaster space in which it happens that's what is honoured and then the rest is easy in fact your business will improve that was the wake up call no session is complete without at least one wake up call thank you even on the level of form everything improves when you are not totally consumed by attention to form even on the level of doing the doing there is a qualitative difference that comes into the doing so this can be tested in a simple interaction you hand an object to someone or if it's business you hand a cheque or a coin a banknote you hand it or you hand something what I'm talking about one can't really talk about so I'm doing the impossible and you are aware of a space of presence in which this action happens that is sacred action and your whole life can become that it's also non-karmic action it doesn't produce further suffering, further karma further unconsciousness whenever an action is a means to an end it's karmic produces more of that somebody comes to you with big drama you know what happened, he did, he said he did to me, I said he shouldn't, they shouldn't and you listen the field, mental emotional field of the drama wants to draw you in to feed also on you on your participation and you're simply there listening, watching alert so even around the big drama there is an even bigger space in which that little turbulence happens well come on, are you going to what do you

think and then perhaps you say something it's not reactive, it comes from a deeper place disaster somebody comes and says it's gone, it's all gone whatever it is and you sense the space around the event aren't you upset you should be upset maybe it is sad, maybe you cry and there's a space around that maybe a child has died how can you not cry and there's a vast space around that that's the end of you as a reactive entity it only happens in the realm of form nothing in that realm matters absolutely it matters relatively not absolutely and all forms dissolve eventually some suddenly so one of the many ways in which we could speak of this gathering here and its purpose is to say we are getting acquainted with spaciousness in a way that's the only teaching here spacious presence there are many things in the universe millions and millions of galaxies each galaxy containing millions and billions of suns but compared to the vastness of space what's in the space is very little there's always much more nothing than something and even the essence of everything that's there is space form is emptiness emptiness is form one of the ancient Buddhist sutras and yes, I haven't used the word emptiness, I don't want people to run out of the room that is the there's a Buddhist term, emptiness which is not a very encouraging promising concept and that's why the Buddha used it so that you can't make it into a concept because emptiness denies itself nobody can possess it because then you're nobody and yet even emptiness does not exhaust its true meaning not at all even emptiness is only a pointer and even that pointer only shows a fragment of what's there or is not there you see, we're getting into paradox because we're using language to speak of that of which one cannot speak the first sentence in the Tao Te Ching the Tao that can be spoken of or the Tao that can be named is not the true Tao and then he continues to talk about it just as I do but he's given a warning the words, that's not quite it don't get attached to that that's what the mind does that's how the truth becomes a religion the mind attaches itself to the signposts mine, ours hang on to that one I believe so be there wherever you go not so much as a person anymore although the form is still there let the form become transparent through surrender to the suchness, the isness of this moment and then be there as the spaciousness be there as the space which is what you are in truth in your essence not as a person the person is a peripheral thing a temporary form that consciousness takes playing the game of form and you bring spaciousness you're not consumed by this temporary form and think it matters dreadfully what happens to this form I've got to make it work can't it's destined to collapse both the physical vehicle as well as the entire story that it's trying to build up eventually it all comes to nothing pop another soap bubble gone when you're there as spaciousness spacious presence you're also there as peace only the knower of spaciousness can bring peace as long as you're well-identified with one particular form there's no peace and love certain words I don't use too often God, love they've been used for so long by the ego in a moment if any question arises you're welcome to ask particularly if it's a question that is practical speculative is not that helpful what is the ultimate purpose of the universe how does what you say compare with sutra number 365 he says the opposite to what you say must be something wrong here if there are questions then after the questions I will start meeting with some of you and exchange a

few hugs not everybody all at once and some more tomorrow also tomorrow we have a session of course in the morning after lunch we'll just meet together informally I can sign some books whatever people want to do some more hugs photo sessions anything goes as long as there's a spaciousness around it now if you ask a question I don't know if there are any I don't know if there will be an answer the spaciousness it all comes out of that Ramana Maharshi had a beautiful way of answering certain questions with silence in which ultimately all questions dissolve do we have a microphone for questions it may be better because we are recording it otherwise your question can't be heard it's coming

[Speaker 2] (4:30:51 - 4:30:54)

how do I stop my mind wandering off into the future

[Speaker 1] (4:30:57 - 4:31:09)

question number one thank you and then it's coming to you

[Speaker 2] (4:31:13 - 4:31:20)

you mentioned a couple of children's books that had pointed to the truth I'm wondering if you could tell us what they are

[Speaker 1] (4:31:20 - 4:56:29)

thank you so first there's the question about the mind wandering off into the future well it's in the nature of the mind to do that bringing greater acceptance to this moment greater yes to this moment a little mouse wants to learn about presence I suggest a few things in the book of course there are certain techniques like virtually any meditation technique is there to bring your attention into the now so you could take up some meditative technique that is a helpful device it's a good starting point to bring your attention into the now as part of your meditation now awareness is the essence of meditation awareness which is now awareness present moment awareness the only obstacle with meditative techniques sometimes there are perhaps basically two obstacles one is some techniques give you too much time they have too many steps that you need to master to finally become good at it and that is closely related to the other obstacle in any meditation technique and that's the meditator who is trying to get somewhere with his technique trying to achieve a state through the technique so the technique may be beautiful and the meditator is using it in the service of some future goal to be achieved unknowingly because that's the mindset that the meditator brings to his or her meditation especially the western mind well most minds these days are western minds it's always goal orientation needing to get somewhere this energy going into I've observed some western meditators they are sometimes admired by eastern meditators because they look so perfect in their meditation so committed so they can sit for 5 hours oh good meditator well I should be I've been doing it for 10 years and so and

then you can see surrender has not happened through it it's an imposed technique that for a little while keeps the lid on the boiling kettle and the boiling kettle the lid blows off the boiling kettle until the moment the meditator gets up from his meditation and interacts with his wife and children so some meditations are beautiful very simple there are meditations on your breath ancient meditations where you observe your breathing very gently you could learn that in 5 minutes observe the inflow and outflow of breath without needing to get anywhere without needing to become anything to achieve some state you are not present then you would be using a beautiful meditation in the service of future simply observe how the breath happens and then after a while there's the breath and there's the spaciousness simple or you can practice meditating on the inner body through vipassana beautiful meditation structured slight drawback can take time but nevertheless simple can be powerful too if practiced rightly and then you could use a mantra meditation that reduces the mental noise to a single noise and then you drop that one don't forget to drop the mantra eventually and then there's still the main meditation once you become acquainted with what that is the mind becomes calm a spaciousness arises then the importance is to bring that into everyday life but it's often through meditation that many people become first acquainted with it others become acquainted with it through suffering and through surrender that happens in the midst of suffering they've never meditated surrender just suddenly happens they may not be able to talk about it and so then you bring that into everyday life where usually, as you know everything is a means to an end because you need to get to the future the mind is projecting itself continuously trying to control the outcome rehearsing the next moment and anticipating the next moment and working over time labeling, commenting working something out and there you can consciously make yourself a cup of tea and every movement is complete filling up the kettle the sound of the water you feel the pot starts to boil this was later formalized in the Japanese tea ceremony it simply means bringing awareness total awareness to an action then later after centuries it can become a formal procedure and you can become quite good at it without having the essential ingredient of awareness that's quite possible but the true meaning is to bring total consciousness total presence to an action where not the slightest not even a fragment of any movement is a means towards some future point in other words it happens in complete stillness in that field of spaciousness so you don't have to learn a technique for that just give your complete attention to any action first choose short things don't say I'm going to be attentive for the next hour and then a minute later you're gone back into the head little things and this sounds insignificant even placing an object from here to there takes perhaps 5 seconds you can do that without making that movement a means to an end there's a spacious presence drinking a glass of water usually it's a means to an end you want the water to get down here as quickly as possible into the body and then you look for the next thing and the next thing might not actually be eating or drinking it could be some other absorbing something else and if you observe the mind it looks always for the next thing to absorb so you've had the water and then maybe a sandwich and then you go to the magazine or the newspaper and still it's mind stuff a lot of overeating is the

greed of the mind transferred into the body of more, the need of the mind for more not enough and then a magazine you go flick the pages and then comes the next thing some noise switch something on to make noise and then the big one the TV and the amazing thing is often when you watch TV your mind comes to a halt and you simply switch into the group mind that takes you over some people get a little bit of relief from watching TV because the personal level of mind comes to a stop at least they're not thinking about their problems but they're switching into the drama on the screens the group mind is taking over so my mind is switching into that and then you're living out other people's dramas whatever they do on the TV screen and so you can be in the state of hypnosis for hours and then go from one channel to another and very hard after a while of wanting to be in the body to be rooted in here because your attention is flowing out continuously particularly not helpful by the way if you're ill and you watch TV that delays your healing because your attention is flowing out it belongs here in here the greatest healer is awareness, inner body awareness and now through TV it flows out and out children do it that's why their minds become so restless even at an early age looking for the next stimulus stimulus so there are meditation methods they're good if used rightly and then use everyday life bring some space in I mentioned getting into your car if you have a car you shut the door and don't make the next movement don't let it be automatic because usually people are dragged along by a stream the stream of mind becomes a stream of doing you sit in the car for 10 seconds and observe your breath or just be but here too the practitioner, we can even call it a practice could pervert this practice and say, ok, I'm giving myself 10 seconds and there's an inner push you're just waiting for the 10 seconds to be over because you read in a book that it's a good thing to do and then you go on look occasionally at anything natural a tree, a flower, a cloud, water plant and stay with it for a minute or two and just look and you'll be amazed how deep and beautiful a flower can be when you don't immediately label it or want something from it or want it so you give yourself a chance so that presence comes in and the mind says no, you have no time looking at a flower, I've got too much to do tomorrow I'll look at the flower one minute it would only have to be one minute 10 seconds after closing the door of your car no, I haven't got the time can't do it now often the mind will tell you, no, no, not now it always says, not now I saw a nice bumper sticker in the States which said procrastinate now and this is what the mind does as far as presence is concerned I have no time to be present now too much on my mind children's books I saw one recently unfortunately it was in Italian and I forget the title now and it had big pictures of a child just a few, 20 pages or so each page a picture and it had big pictures of a little child going through a pain body attack visual image of it first the child comes home in a bad mood runs up to his room, doesn't want any food and then out of his mouth he gets red and out of his mouth comes this big monster and fills the room and then the monster picks up all his toys and throws them about the room until the little child says, what are you doing? and then the monster suddenly gets smaller and the child puts the monster in a little box and then he opens the door and is sweet again his sweet nature is back he says, is there anything left for dessert?

so the picture book shows the pain body attack so a child who watches that sees that, reads that can identify with that so by observing it you can see the child can become the witness of the pain body but I'll have to get back to you if I could give you the title I know that the original was written in French and somebody sent me the Italian translation and some people have written to me and said they are working on a book for children several people seem to be working on it and I recently received a letter from the widow of a man who died two years ago who wrote the most famous book on bringing up children Dr. Spock's Guide to Childbirth and Child Education a huge book, 50 million copies sold and she wants to bring in some of the teaching into the next edition another miracle so it's really the truth the essential truth is beginning to get out there and I know many teachers who are now bringing this teaching into their classroom situation they teach presence they teach from presence and so the subject matter becomes secondary and that of course doesn't only apply to schools subject matter being secondary applies to your entire life whatever your life is about whatever your life situation is about which is the subject matter of your life it's little dramas high and low up and down losing and gaining fears, desires that are part of the drama the life situation is the subject matter of your life it is ultimately passing, secondary not primary primary is being spaciousness, presence consciousness the field in which it happens not what happens so imagine teachers teaching like that quickly the world becomes transformed that way there's a noise here the mind may call it disturbing but an interesting practice and if the moment the mind calls it disturbing it builds up further mental activity around it an interesting practice meet anything that's disturbing like a noise with complete acceptance not a trace left of resistance and suddenly there's space around it and suddenly there's peace the very thing that was disturbing has taken you into peace because you fully accepted it that works for little things and big things but it's amazing when you just practice it with a little thing like a disturbing noise it's almost as if any noise then became transformed into om om it's beautiful any more questions ok the mic is coming oh one here and then two here

[Speaker 2] (4:56:30 - 4:56:40)

you spoke about growth through pain and suffering but what about other ways how about growth through happiness and joy

[Speaker 1] (4:56:40 - 5:05:57)

that's what we're doing here there's no pain and suffering here unless you have physical discomfort the beauty of spiritual teaching and the truth that is in every spiritual teaching and that's why it's there is you don't need it anymore you've had it enough you can only truly listen to a spiritual teaching truly be open to it when you've had enough suffering and then you reach a point where you no longer need suffering your further evolution no longer happens through suffering the essence of this teaching also although I do not deny suffering is you don't need anymore now and so everybody who is here has

been through a certain amount of suffering enough for you to be here and to be able to listen and the teaching is no further suffering is necessary some pain you may still experience as the accumulated pain inside you but it doesn't need to turn into suffering some pain you may occasionally still experience in the body toothache, this or that, could happen it's not suffering suffering implies on top of the pain there is a resisting complaining, whining entity that derives sustenance from its complaining and whining so that's how pain turns into suffering you can be free of suffering from now on why not? because you have seen the mechanism of suffering you see that all suffering is resistance to what is is how suffering arises you see that the end of suffering is surrender uncompromising nothing that happens can make you suffer anymore if suffering arises even that will arise within a field of peace it seems almost contradictory if you have a child and the child dies yes, there will be sadness there will be tears but there will also be a very deep peace in that total acceptance there is an undercurrent when the spaciousness is in your life there is an undercurrent of what one could call joy that has nothing to do with what's happening or not happening in your life situation very subtle I sometimes call it the joy of being in translations of certain teachings you may sometimes find the word happiness used there for example, Ramana Maharshi says happiness is your true nature I don't know what the original word is that he used I prefer to use the word joy to talk of this, it's the same thing and the way I use those words happiness and unhappiness occur in the phenomenal realm something good happens you feel happy you lose something you feel unhappy so the way I use those words happiness and unhappiness are conditioned states Ramana Maharshi when he used the word happiness, whatever the original word was I don't know whether it was translated well was pointing of course to that deeper state of the joy that is there as the joy of being of aliveness of presence and undercurrent I don't often talk about it because as the false falls away from you that is there if I talk about it, you're going to look for it perhaps through my future just as I don't talk about love so much because that is there also as your natural state when the false falls away joy and love are really a single one single thing or no thing one diamond facets of one diamond of course you have the beautiful Satchitananda facets of that diamond being consciousness bliss being one knowing yourself as consciousness is Ananda bliss but when bliss becomes your normal state it doesn't stand out anymore as bliss it's not a high you're not on a permanent high otherwise one talks about it and people now look for a permanent high you can't have a permanent high because high implies low the Buddha was a great master at not mentioning certain things that's why when western scholars first encountered Buddhism they called it life denying nihilistic atheistic they didn't understand they only saw what he talked about and they didn't see what he didn't talk about but pointed to through not talking about it and so you could get PhD's in Buddhist philosophy not knowing a single thing about Buddhism did you have a question?

yes ok, I'll come to you

[Speaker 2] (5:06:01 - 5:06:04)

Eckhart, it seems that so much of our human interaction

[Speaker 1] (5:06:04 - 5:06:19)

is your illusory self interacting with another illusory self using illusory words about matters that as you say aren't that important could you tell us in your thoughts

[Speaker 2] (5:06:19 - 5:06:28)

how we can learn to share presence and communicate with each other without bringing that into the interaction

[Speaker 1] (5:06:28 - 5:21:40)

yes, thank you that is quite simple and that is to bring stillness into the interaction and the best place to bring stillness into the interaction is whenever you are listening to another person be there in that alert listening there is the field of attention it's not just the listening what arises is the field of attention and you give that person complete attention there is the field of mind and you listen completely and at first it might seem strange it's a new way of interacting and perhaps not immediately the conversation may not at first flow as it did before when there was continuous mind interaction and it is certain that you will speak less than before but what you say if it comes from there will be qualitatively different not just nervous fearful or grasping mind interaction and you need a little bit of trust that the right words will come without rehearsing beforehand so usually when people listen while they are listening they are commenting they are already denying they are already contradicting in their heads in preparing the next sentence what they really want to get out is what they have to contribute to this they are not really interested in listening to you they are interested in their opinion voicing it and by voicing it, it's not just that it's asserting yourself as an identity and your opinion is an essential part voicing your viewpoint voicing your mental position is an important part of standing out as somebody and so it's at first very strange not to be in that state of stillness in which you don't need to be anybody and then the words come not self-assertive words that are designed to strengthen your sense of self either because you are right and the other person is wrong because you are always right and the other is always wrong that's obvious that's how right and wrong works so become acquainted with words that are unprepared and arise spontaneously out of stillness this is strange at first people sometimes may come to you for help more likely that they will come to you as more presence arises in you many people will intuitively sense that there is something there that they feel drawn to and so they come to you expecting perhaps some help or guidance maybe they come with their drama but they want and then if you want to prevent yourself from being there as a help try to figure out in your mind while they are talking to you how you can help them try to fix them I'm going to fix you then

that doesn't work the greatest help is to be there as the spacious presence and listen and when you are just listening you are not buying into their drama either you are not feeding that if it is drama you listen that is already a form of healing true listening, because true listening implies spacious presence and some psychiatrists psychologists counselors who work with people after years of practice through the mind gradually begin to be able to simply listen and it is only then that they become effective as healers as counselors, as therapists they are no longer using the accumulated knowledge of the mind that has its place but true healing comes from a deeper level and there are even psychoanalysts psychoanalysis being a very mental thing you talk, you know the psychoanalyst you lie on a couch and the psychoanalyst scribbles continuously the stream of mind that comes from the patient and then after years of scribbling more and more often sorry if there is a psychoanalyst here there are some very effective psychoanalysts because after years of practice they begin to listen truly and then they put down their notepad and suddenly a spacious presence arises so into interactions you bring the stillness whether it is a normal interaction or somebody comes for guidance or help you can't do anything I can't do anything if I thought I had to do spiritual teaching it would be a burden I would be stressed it happens through the stillness, presence, spaciousness first it's strange when you find words coming out of that bring the stillness into the slightest interactions I often mention buying something in a shop handing your money doing that in a field of stillness in other words I mentioned it briefly before the interaction becomes secondary the field is primary and it's a holy encounter the other person may not know what's going on nothing is going on but may love you, like you for some reason, doesn't know why and it's nothing to do with you feels more him or herself in your presence and it's nothing to do with you feels a peace and it's nothing to do with you Mike is coming I want to ask how to handle chronic illness which occurs daily how to get out of it and get joy out of it the chronic illness chronic illness don't try to get joy out of it it doesn't work like that don't build an identity around the illness me as this ill person that's the tendency of the mind let the illness drive you into the now don't give it time the illness of course has a past and has a future as an illness but the reality is only the condition of this moment the condition of this moment is what it is there could be physical pain there could be disability there could be physical discomfort whatever the condition is the illness is the condition of this moment so more and more you allow the illness to push you into the now and you surrender to the condition of this moment no inner resistance you relax into the condition one could say even if it's pain it could be other forms of illness there are some illnesses you don't have a symptom necessarily you know you have a serious illness but no symptom has appeared yet you've just been told that you have it be totally present with whatever condition is here relax into the condition completely and then you are using illness for consciousness it becomes your teacher I mentioned earlier today my brother experiencing acute pain almost every night and the strange thing is it can go either way pain or illness is only potentially a teacher it could go the other way and it can strengthen the ego in which case there is more and more contraction happening more and more resentment, bitterness, unhappiness

happening through the illness potentially however it can be the opposite it happened to my brother that instead of contracting through the condition of the illness he surrendered at some point he began to surrender to that simply the pain and a strange thing happens when you completely surrender into pain don't even label it pain anymore very strange you only have to find that out for yourself and so the illness or rather the condition of this moment drives you into surrender and so what arises is presence, consciousness through that condition so I've seen people in wheelchairs no trace of unhappiness and I've seen other people in wheelchairs for years people who are confined to a wheelchair who look miserably unhappy and bitter and resentful and angry why me? why should this happen to me?

and others surrendered to the condition

[Speaker 2] (5:21:43 - 5:21:44)

oh

[Speaker 1] (5:21:51 - 6:33:19)

light shining through their eyes they have a good spiritual teacher of course it's that condition and when complete surrender happens often healing happens but complete surrender surrender is never in the service of something else it is not a means to an end ok I'm going to surrender because I'll become enlightened I'll make more money if I'm surrendered yeah you probably will but a doctor wrote a big book on healing and prayer and healing and relationship and he found that a common thing running through all the cases that he studied the most effective healer is I don't think he used the word surrender acceptance not fighting the western mind which is the human everywhere these days you know the western mind is always fighting something fighting an illness western medicine is geared towards fighting and of course creates a lot of karma a lot of secondary suffering a lot of secondary illnesses through the treatment it's fighting don't get this wrong you do not surrender to an illness illness is a concept you only surrender to the condition of this moment and so you welcome the condition whatever it is let's return there may be time for some more questions tomorrow now I'll exchange hugs with a few people and then with some more tomorrow if you're not exchanging hugs there's no compulsion of course you can just sit here and take it as a meditation while I exchange hugs or you may have some other business if anybody leaves early tomorrow then of course come up tonight for hugs here thank you so here we are the retreat is getting closer to its end like every experience fleeting before you know it it's gone then you wake up at home was that retreat was that a dream or was I there or at the moment of your death what was all that like cloud formations they don't stay for very long and if then at the moment of your death you're still looking for yourself somewhere in those experiences by holding on to or identifying with that's very fearful at the moment when even the dream dissolves the dream of form evaporates trying to hang on to something

or here trying to hang on to this experience and feeling sorry when it's over but of course it's not the essence of this isn't the experience because this experience points beyond itself just as the words that are part of this experience point beyond themselves it's not to be accumulated as an experience well some people will want to take photos they did that last year that's ok but not really to be accumulated as an experience everything here points to something that is beyond the experience the experience and your life is a constant stream of experiences arises in consciousness an object arises in consciousness an event or thought a sequence of events places and the usual way people live is to be identified with the object that arises as an experience as a thought, as an emotion an event well one could summarize it as experience because even a thought I'm experiencing a thought I'm experiencing a happy thought I'm experiencing a painful thought I'm here, I'm there I'm experiencing this so usually normal state of consciousness you're identified with the experience and although you say I am experiencing you might not even say it in regards to thought because you're so completely that thought even to say I'm experiencing this thought there's a little bit of standing back from the thought most people can't even say that they are the thought and they are their experience and then whatever happens to them as an experience they have a relationship to it which is one of repulsion or attraction they feel aversion towards it or they feel desire towards it you have a relationship towards whatever experiences arises fear, desire want it, don't want it so objects an experience is an object that arises in consciousness so most people are in a reactive relationship to that and an identifying relationship all they know is the object that arises in consciousness although they may sometimes say I, they don't know the true meaning of I I becomes reduced to a story, a me a collection of experiences retained in the mind around which you draw a boundary and say that's me, conditioning mental content, mental-emotional content a bundle of content, experiences held together usually when people say I they refer to that entity that mind-made entity but the depth of I the true meaning of I is very different from that so for most people the I they have made themselves into an object in consciousness so this is why people have a relationship with themselves many people hate themselves and then gradually you progress you read new age books and then with the help of affirmations on bathroom mirrors and other places you learn to love yourself but even then you still have a relationship with yourself and so you still made yourself into an object in your experiences as if you were walking with another one next to you I hate you, do I hate you? I love you, do I really love you?

and the thing is every object has certain limitations because it is a limited form even a thought a thought form about yourself is limited every object is there because it has a polarity so if you feel great about yourself it cannot be sustained for too long because it's a high it can't exist without a low and then you come down and you feel you have suddenly a bad relationship with yourself so people make themselves their identity into an object of experience and so try to improve that get rid of the undesirable aspects of that object in your experience and add desirable ones and so you can work trying to

improve yourself nothing wrong with trying to improve yourself on the phenomenal level nothing wrong with adding something but you can't find yourself by improving yourself that's the only place where improving yourself doesn't work the rest is fine it's a nice thing to do one of its primary limitations is that it doesn't last that's a big one it doesn't last for that long an experience comes and goes and then it has a polarity but life is so frustrating and such a burden to most people because they seek in that accumulation of objects in their experience they seek themselves completion they seek themselves as an improved object in their experience or even a healed object a completely healed entity and so then you look out for more to complete you doesn't work and then it's a huge realization that no object of experience is you and although you've been using the word I for a long time I is probably the word that most frequently perhaps the most frequently used word in the language and certainly the central concern of most people the center of the universe I and the rest of the world although it's the most frequently used word they don't know the depth of I of what that really means because they use I with reference to an object or an accumulation of objects in consciousness and they don't realize that the true depth of I is not that which arises and of course subsides evaporates the true depth of I is not the object in consciousness but the space of consciousness so one could say that to use an analogy you are not an object in space you are space now this may be nice as an idea in the head oh, I'm space and it could if it remains that of course it doesn't liberate you because even that can become an object in consciousness as an idea that you get attached to and then you can have an argument with somebody else who does not believe that you are space I am telling you that I am space now the question how do you shift from that being a pointer to actually working as a pointer not to be accumulated as a pointer as further content, further object in consciousness but how does that work so that a signpost is supposed to take you there not to be accumulated and so of course what I'm talking about now is a kind of summary of what we've been talking about very slightly different perspective again on the one subject thing, no thing that is the essence of the gathering how do you actually know this to be true that you are space beyond an idea in the head and of course the perpetuation of the state of identification with objects in consciousness to a large extent happens through the reactivity of the mind made entity towards experiences the personal reactive relationship towards experiences that arise and through the reactivity you get trapped in that illusory entity the illusory entity strengthens itself through having a personalized and reactive relationship to everything in life including what you see as yourself the mind made self you react even to yourself I don't like myself I'm beginning to love myself I'm not so sure about myself anymore I don't feel good about myself I feel great about myself and that fluctuates continuously according to what experiences you encounter so what the that self or false self the superficial I cannot do is to be in a non reactive relationship to experience to allow experience so the key is then we've seen it the key is allowing the experience that is happening now because it can only happen now allowing the experience to be the object that arises to be not to disallow another word then for that is the word that some people dislike surrender to that which is then

action happens not as a reaction the doing happens as a response to the situation not to strengthen the false self or to protect it and of course there was a question last night how do I stop my noisy mind and that's a primordial question meditation helps but the most powerful meditation is a little like a little crutch, a stick that before you use it helps, can be a help the greatest the most powerful way to stop your mind is not by doing anything is simply by being in a relationship of surrender to what is often detecting the state of non surrender and then saying oh look here is a state of non surrender and so you bring surrender when you detect a state of non surrender you bring surrender to that you cannot fight non surrender through more force so as this to put it in words the new state of consciousness arises many times you will detect within yourself the state of non surrender contraction, emotional negativity thoughts about complaining often containing the word should and things the talk in the head and suddenly now it will be easier to detect that mechanism and so you say oh there is the state of no to what is you've recognized it this is stepping back there is a contraction ok so you always bring the yes into the no and then at times you will be surprised there is suddenly a complete openness whereas before there was reactivity to the similar situation there is suddenly the absence of reactivity there is suddenly simply a sense of space it happens nobody is there to react to it the same old thing maybe in your husband wife relationship hundreds of times it's been a trigger for reactive what he said or she said and suddenly for the first time there is the absence of a reaction you simply allow it you also begin to see the futility of reactivity that it doesn't change what is because it is already and it doesn't bring about true change the reaction empowers that the state against which it reacts the very condition against which it reacts becomes empowered through the reaction and then you discover the enormous power that is contained in surrender that you were cut off from before because the egoic little me the little I has been saying you must fight for power control the universe fight, fight the power of surrender is the power of consciousness itself and then that intelligence that is in consciousness that is unconditioned can express itself through you perhaps only as an emanation of peace and joy if nothing else happened and the rest of your life nothing changed in your life you did the same thing lived in the same place didn't improve your life anymore on the phenomenal level no raising salary anymore all the same if all that happened was an emanation of that spaciousness through you would be quite enough but it's hard for things not to change because for a start people are drawn to that all those in whom there is only the slightest opening are drawn to it so if you are a hairdresser suddenly you get an influx of customers provided you are reasonably good at it but if you are not good you will be good because presence qualitatively improves any doing because it's not a means to an end and anything that you do that is not a means to an end is of high quality so that then this I call the flowering of consciousness is when the little I gives way to the I and you can't predict how that will affect your outer life not that it doesn't matter not that it matters that much anymore what happens in your phenomenal existence but it's precisely when your phenomenal existence becomes of secondary importance to you that it improves greatly it's a by-product but when your phenomenal existence is of

primary importance it's frustrating very frustrating existence and you never quite make it on that level so this frees you from being bound determined by your phenomenal existence what I sometimes call your life situation and most people are totally absorbed by it they are that and the way I put it in the book is I say life and your life situation life is deeper than your life situation and people forget life is the unmanifested one consciousness the I not any object that arises in consciousness so your life situation or your phenomenal existence as the sequence of arising objects is recognized as not yourself and that's called liberation on the level of form you still seem to be limited yes you might even have diarrhea and it's very limiting the greatest emperor becomes a worm through diarrhea the master of the universe suddenly reduced to a little worm and yesterday you thought you were the master of the universe and that's the world of form it has beautiful things built into it that often remind you of your limited nature your insignificance as form and that becomes beautiful too when you know yourself to be beyond that the very limitations are to be enjoyed as the play of phenomenal existence formations you enjoy the clouds you don't say don't move or just like that so the quickest way out of being completely trapped in that continuous stream of arising and subsiding thoughts that keeps people that's the primary trap is surrender to what is and standing back from thought the recognition of thought as thought as fleeting as mental noise there's a spiritual teacher in the states Byron Katie who has certain questions that she asks people in sessions when people say something complain about something one of the questions is can you really know this to be true they have expressed a thought every thought is a perspective a limited viewpoint no thought encapsulates the truth and then after a while people realize that they can't really know anything absolute through thought so gradually there's a disidentification from thought thought still happens but you don't completely believe in every thought anymore it's recognized as thought that also is the arising of spaciousness the recognition of thought as thought is not thought the recognition of thought as thought is already arising presence arising spaciousness only from there can you recognize thought and to some extent allow it to be it's the human mind the noisy human mind is not your personal problem it's the human mind and to some extent thoughts will continue but when you allow thought even thought, but know it as thought the compulsive nature of thought subsides thoughts still come and go but there are spaces in between and thought loses its power to make you feel unhappy because you don't completely believe completely in every thought because all unhappiness arises through self-talk nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so Shakespeare recognized that so that's what makes you happy and unhappy not the event but the thought about the event a personalized relationship to the event which is a thought and then you recognize the limited nature of that that it is only a perspective a personalized reactive relationship and then it's recognized as thought and you don't completely believe in it anymore oh the same old thoughts the same old reactions there they are again so what do you do with that there they are there it is so this arises in you now it cannot not arise in you after having sat here for so long but if it were not arising already you wouldn't even have come here the ability to recognize thought and to stand

in an allowing relationship also to thought not saying I must stop my mind for a little while you can put a lid on it but the kettle keeps boiling and finally it blows off you sometimes see it with spiritual people I mean spiritual people who are trying to be spiritual it's peaceful and then suddenly something triggers the wife says something or just something or the husband and they blow up there was a lid on the kettle so suppress you can't really suppress thought but we can be there and know it as thought the knowing is not thought because the knowing is the witnessing is the space around thought is presence don't underestimate the force behind those patterns mental emotional patterns that you carry inside that are part of humanity no need to condemn yourself if it still happens occasionally just know it for what it is as it happens maybe just after it's happened oops ok so nothing personal in any of this need to be said again don't attempt to achieve a state of consciousness it doesn't work don't use future use future for practical things catching a plane making an appointment planning a trip but don't use future for enlightenment liberation doesn't work the only thing you can use for enlightenment liberation is now your relationship to now your openness to now your yes to now ultimately you don't have a relationship to now in the deepest sense you are the now because the now is consciousness is the field in which objects arise and subside so when I say your relationship to now it's a relative way of speaking not the absolute truth you're open to now that's the place there's then a shift if you have been a spiritual seeker which implies future because every seeker must look to the future because search implies that there's a future you can't seek without future it's somewhere else in space or time or space and time the search so the seeking you may have heard some teachers who say abandon the search there's absolutely nothing you can do go home why do you even come here there's absolutely nothing you can do and again there's some truth in that but no thought has the entire truth and to get to the truth sometimes you need to hold two seemingly opposing perspectives without eliminating one or the other or identifying with one or the other hold them both then you get a little closer to the truth there's nothing you can do and there's everything you can do it's a paradox one seems to deny the other and yet the truth is beyond what can be encapsulated by thought you hold them both now how can I say there's nothing I can do what doesn't make sense and the way I sometimes put it is if you have been a seeker and there has been a strong impulse and there are other teachers of course the opposite of those teachers who say go home there's nothing you can do and they say if you are not determined if you don't seek in the same way that a drowning man wants air if there's not the same determination in you for spiritual liberation that a drowning man would have for air then you won't get there that's the other teachers tell you that who is right who is wrong they both have an aspect of the truth how do we reconcile them if that is even possible I could put it like that there has been perhaps in you an enormous impulse towards spiritual liberation or enlightenment and then you suddenly hear somebody say nothing you can do I say continue to be a seeker seek with the same determination that you have been seeking but expand on the meaning of the word seeking where seeking in its conventional sense implies you are seeking elsewhere in space or time bring your

seeking into the now and what that means bring that intensity that was in the seeking and that became future bring the same intensity into that alertness that is here when you are totally facing the now that which had become time becomes presence the same intensity that became time and mind time is mind the same intensity becomes intensity and the alertness of presence that the Zen master pointed to with his index finger the meaning of Zen is that intensity of presence seek in the now bring that intensity that was the search into the now but then suddenly you find you are not really seeking anymore there is simply an intense conscious presence in the now and then seeking and finding are suddenly one the seeking is the finding the intensity of presence is already that which you had been seeking the very force behind the seeking is it so of course there is nothing you can do and there is everything you can do because you are already it how could you do something to become it uncompromising acceptance of what is can that be called doing yes and no because really it is uncompromising allowing can allowing this moment to be called doing in a way everything else is doing but that is not doing you see how language is very limited how easily you can mistake the signposts for the truth I am just showing you the relativity of signposts they can work if used rightly never attach yourself to any one and then you have arguments there is a doer no there is no doer I am telling you he said there is no doer so you will find yourself frequently stepping back into now lost in mind step back and every time it is good you get back no matter how often you get lost in mind in objects of consciousness and suddenly step back back again every time you step back into now you realize it is actually quite a good place so to speak hell was in here, up here in the head the now is actually fine more than that it is mysterious, it is wonderful when you are alert to it because there is always more to it than what appears on the surface all the forms that happen now there is always more to it and that more is the now itself the space of now so when you step back into now it is not just that you become more aware of your surroundings, more acutely aware of sense perceptions more here there is more that happens there is that sense of presence or space and that is the sacred dimension of now no matter where no matter what form the now takes there is always sacredness in now the sacred dimension of it and once you know that it is everywhere the same it doesn't matter that much anymore where you are when you are in the now and it is miraculous when you find that in the most unlikely places turmoil all around you so liberation is this liberation from mind liberation from past and future, time liberation from the world of form and nothing is denied liberation from a false sense of self or we could say from the self it is all one that is the essence of our gathering here not the external experience of it and the essence of this gathering cannot leave you because it is your very essence so to be back here at any time re-enter the now and you are back here the essence of this is always there as your essence, as the essence of now so if you go back home next month or next year and one day you think, oh that was so nice or whatever you think it's still there, the essence of it not the external form of it that doesn't matter the form you may have captured on a photograph but that will fade eventually, sooner or later and that's gone too so much so that as you dwell in that state of consciousness

every time something an object dissolves in your life death in one form or another it's beautiful enough words the signposts have served their purpose no need to collect them and we'll continue this sacred gathering with a sacred exchange of hugs if you're not stepping forward I invite you to remain seated and just sit in the energy field